ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA **HARRY MAURER**

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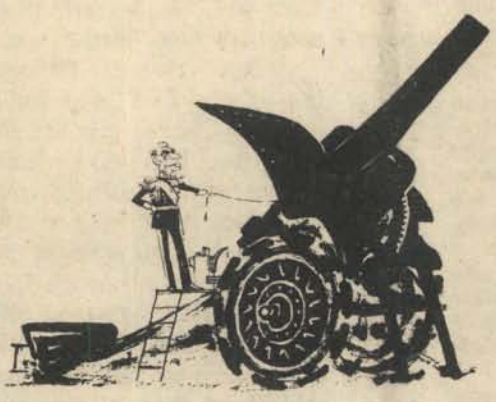

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LETTERS

Malaysia muzzled

Princeton, N.J.

On November 3, the BBC World Service News announced that the National Front Government had arrested six prominent Malaysian politicians, including three members of Parliament, under the Internal Security Act of 1960 for alleged involvement in activities of the "Communist united front." . . . Unfortunately, not a single American newspaper appears to have carried this piece of news on the latest wave of repression by the Malaysian Government, although the *International Herald Tribune* of Paris carried it briefly on November 5.

The latest arrests came shortly after the arrest and detention of Samad Ismail, the managing editor of the English-language nationwide newspaper, *The New Straits Times* of Malaysia in June 1976, and his subsequent "confession" in September. Samad Ismail is still under detention.

Under the Internal Security Act of 1960, the Malaysian Government can detain any dissident without trial indefinitely. There are at present about 2,000 political prisoners in Malaysia; at least seventy-five of these political prisoners have been in arbitrary detention for more than five years. There is undoubtedly a McCarthy-type political witch hunt in Malaysia today, growing mainly out of what is essentially a very intense and fierce intraparty struggle for power within the UMNO (United Malays National Organization), the dominant party in the coalition National Front, after the death of Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak in January last year.

Under the banner of "anti-communism" all dissidents are being branded as "anti-national elements," "subversives" or "undesirables." Through the Printing Presses Ordinance of 1948, which requires all newspapers and publications to renew their printing and publishing licenses at the end of every year, the press has been completely muzzled; the trade unions have been effectively emasculated by the Industrial Relations Act of 1967; student unions and organizations have been systematically dissolved or rendered impotent by the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971 and the University Colleges (Amendment) Act of 1975. The constitutional Opposition parties have been, and are still being, hounded by the Internal Security Act, the Societies Act, the Police Act and the Sedition Act. . . .

As if all these repressive and obnoxious laws were not enough, the National Front regime bulldozed through Parliament the Essential (Security Cases) Regulations of 1975 at the end of that year. This Act has destroyed the last remaining principles of democracy and has in fact turned Malaysia into a Fascist dictatorship, reducing Parliament . . . to a rubber stamp and . . . veritable farce. . . .

Today Malaysia is a country of fear, rumors, suspicions and utter confusion and uncertainty. . . . It is a land of informers and betrayers and agents of the Police Special Branch. . . . All available information, trends and indications point sadly to the probability that repression in Malaysia will grow worse and wider in the coming months and years, especially so if there is no internationally informed opinion and protest. *Fan Yew Teng, M.P.*

correction

Any Kellys mentioned by Adam Clymer in his "Inauguration Day in Des Moines" [*The Nation*, Feb. 5], were in fact Duffys—Mike, Chick, Bridget and even teenage daughter, Kelly Duffy, whose first name may have been what led Mr. Clymer astray when he was retyping his article.

The Editors

The editors welcome letters from readers but regret that space limitations often prevent publication of those of more than 250 words.

EDITORIALS

Trying to Scare Carter

From their mini-pulpits the columnists and commentators are busy shouting advice and criticism up at the man in what Teddy Roosevelt called the "bully pulpit" of the Presidency. The aim of that nagging pair, Evans and Novak, and of the ponderous Joseph Kraft, to take just two examples, is somehow to bring President Carter to heel on matters of American strategy and the arms that back it up. The message is simple, however insulting the language. It is that Carter does not know what he is doing with his overtures to the Russians on steps to eliminate both sides' nuclear arsenals.

In his February 1st column, Kraft informed Carter that it would be "wise for him to stop popping off until he gets a better grip on the issue," and that "he gains very little by shooting off his mouth on delicate subjects"—ones which Kraft, of course, understands much better than does the President. The team of Evans and Novak goes in less for straight preaching; it prefers fearsome threats and innuendoes from its usual anonymous but "inside" sources on and off Capitol Hill. The burden of the Evans and Novak message is not that the Russians are coming but that they have already arrived, breathing the fire of their nuclear superiority at this helpless nation.

In the same week along come the Joint Chiefs of Staff those famously dovish fellows, with a report flatly stating that they "do not agree that the Soviet Union has achieved military superiority over the United States." (They were contradicting the recently retired Air Force intelligence head, General Keegan, and his alarmist allies.) The Chiefs say they believe the Russians would like to gain superiority but "have not achieved that goal." The top military brass then steps out of line, in our opinion, by volunteering the view that "the United States is moving in the correct direction" on both military and diplomatic fronts vis-à-vis the Soviet Union (when will soldiers learn that diplomacy is not their business?). Still, this is a far cry from the lament of the Cassandra-columnists.

Fortunately, there is no sign that the prophets of doom are bothering the President in his first few days in office. As we suggested last week, he talks and acts as if he is thinking of unilateral steps that might compel or induce the Russians to follow suit.

His appointment of Paul C. Warnke to head the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency is reassuring evidence to this effect—Warnke, in the later years of the Johnson administration, did as much as a high Defense Department official could to resist the continuing escalation of the war in Vietnam. It does not seem likely that he will be comfortable on the hawkish perch established by his predecessor in that job, Fred Ikle, who was often more pessimistic than the Pentagonites in his appraisal of the possibility for arms control and the reduction of forces.

In his first actions on foreign policy Carter has done some obvious and necessary things. The Mondale trip of our principal allies, begun hours after taking office

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is more than mere symbolism; it is a solid demonstration of proper priorities. On the sensitive matter of human rights in Russia, one is tempted to see the State Department spokesman's apparently uncleared-at-the-highest-level statement in support of the Soviet physicist and Nobelist Andrei Sakharov as a disownable trial balloon. In any case, both Carter and Vance later said that the statement reflected their views, and there has been no subsequent sign of a clamp-down ordered from the White House; and the government's statement of the day before expressing displeasure with the regime in Czechoslovakia for its harassment of the dissidents who dared to protest Prague's clear violation of the Helsinki accords was indeed cleared by both Vance and Carter.

Our hope must be that Carter and his chief aides will not allow themselves to be intimidated by the many agents of conventional wisdom in Washington. The age of Kissinger, as he must like to think of it, is over. Flashy initiatives that conceal a real immobility of policy are things of the past. If Carter and Co. persist against the obstacles that will be thrown in their way, there is every reason to think that they will be able to show genuine progress toward a more secure world in 1,000, if not 100, days.

What Right to Judge?

Some of the protesters against the war in Vietnam are protesting against what the Vietnamese, now that we are gone, are said to be doing in their own country to their own people. And their ranks are split over the facts of alleged human rights violations in newly independent Vietnam and about the moral right of Americans, whatever their past record on that dreadful war, to criticize the behavior of the Vietnamese Government in dealing with its aftermath.

It seems reasonable to assume that the reconstruction of Vietnamese society by those who won the war is being roughly done. Perhaps not brutally, but not gently either; "re-education" is always an ominous word. Ho Chi Minh, the founder of modern Vietnam, admired the American Declaration of Independence and used to cite its ringing words in exhortations to his own people as they struggled first with the French colonial occupiers and then with their "idealistic" American successors. But Ho certainly knew that the principles of the Declaration and the Bill of Rights were not easily transferable to a society as different from 18th-century America as was the Vietnam whose struggle for independence he led until he died.

Now the question for Americans is, what right do we have to judge what the Vietnamese are doing to remake their own society? The question, morally and practically, is an especially acute one for those Americans who were "right" about American involvement in that war. Does that record of humane correctness confer on them the right to protest against behavior they judge as contravening accepted standards of human rights? Must they make this protest in order to preserve their standing as people who resist brutal political behavior wherever it occurs, at home or abroad?

The Right in this country have always told the protesters that they would lose their credentials unless they were

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even-handed on the matter of human rights. To preserve their moral standing, and to avoid the imputation of a double standard, they must attack the likes of Castro and Tito just as vigorously as they condemn the right-wing dictators with whom this country is aligned, for any violations of the norms of humane political behavior.

There is logic in this position, though the motives of those who proclaim it are often questionable, and their own moral standards double if not triple. But there is a special problem about the protests of the American Vietnam-protesters, and it is most troublesome: the reconstitution of Vietnam must inevitably be based on purging that society of the corruption that built up during the American presence there for all those bad years.

To cite only one example, Saigon tripled its population during the American era and the American war machine fed and sustained that vast parasite population because it was in our interest to do so. Now that we have left, Saigon must be shrunk to its natural size and the Vietnamese countryside must return to an organic relationship with the cities. That means uprooting people who have grown used to urban life and sending them back where they came from, to areas that are no longer "free fire zones," where crops can once again be grown, even on bomb-pitted land where poisonous defoliants linger. Could this kind of transfer of huge numbers of people be done in any society purely by persuasion and appeals to patriotism, without compulsion?

To what extent, therefore, does the fact of having been correct about the American intervention in Vietnam confer the right to censure the Vietnamese for their actions in rebuilding their country? Is it unfair to suggest to these protesting protesters that there is at least a touch of the old American missionary spirit, with all of its destructive self-righteousness, in their complaints to Hanoi?

We do not question the motives of these people, only the sense and effectiveness of their position. And we prefer the position of the petitioners to Congress and the new administration ("Lest We Forget . . . An Appeal for Reconciliation"), which calls for normalizing American relations with Vietnam and the rest of Indochina, providing aid for reconstruction and, here at home, total amnesty and a serious program of rehabilitation for the veterans of that war.

El Salvador, a Touchstone

Why should Americans care who wins the Presidential elections scheduled for February 20 in the tiny Central American republic of El Salvador (pop. 4.1 million)? In almost any other year the contest between the ruling rightist party, the National Party of Conciliation (PCN), and the National Union of Opposition (UNO), a mildly reformist alliance led by the Christian Democrats, would have little importance, symbolic or otherwise. But this election will be the first in Latin America since Carter took office amid vows of greater morality in foreign affairs.

El Salvador is one of half a dozen Latin American countries whose rulers now bother even to hold elections. For that reason, and because the American Government has a long history of intervention in El Salvador's affairs, the official American attitude toward the election will have a significance greater than that of the vote itself.

In many ways El Salvador exemplifies the miseries of the continent. Land is the basis of wealth, and is largely owned by a few families who cultivate export crops like coffee. As a result, many Salvadorans get too little to eat; unlike most Latin American nations, densely populated El Salvador is on the U.N.'s "hunger list." Therefore the trick for the landed oligarchy has long been to maintain itself in power despite constant social ferment. Its formula for survival includes frequent military coups, repression (by American-trained security forces) of students and peasants, and wholesale electoral fraud. All these measures, according to information from the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and testimony last June before Rep. Donald Fraser's Subcommittee on International Organizations, have received ample U.S. support.

Five years ago, during the last Presidential campaign, the Salvadoran Government employed its usual tactics of harassment, intimidation of the opposition and stuffing of ballot boxes. Nevertheless, early returns made it obvious that the opposition candidate, Dr. Napoleón Duarte of the UNO, had won—whereupon the PCN simply declared itself the winner, to the evident pleasure of the American Embassy. An attempt by liberal military officers to put Duarte in power by coup d'état was crushed with help from Guatemalan and Nicaraguan armies (notoriously subservient to American interests) and from unmarked bombers that devastated insurgent positions. The beneficiary was Col. Arturo Molina, who as President has followed the proper repressive course.

During the current campaign the UNO, despite the exile of its best leaders (including Duarte), has again mounted a serious challenge to PCN power. In response, according to WOLA, "The familiar pattern of arrest and detention without charge, of 'disappearances,' of alleged torture, is escalating. . . . Experienced observers of the El Salvador political situation predict that the violence will increase as election day approaches." There is every indication that electoral fraud will again be used.

But there is some hope that the United States will be less friendly toward such fraud. Carter's call for a new morality, the State Department protests over Sakharov and the Czech dissidents, the recent forward-looking report by the Commission on United States-Latin American Relations, all indicate that the government may shift its weight against the politics of repression-as-usual. The elections in El Salvador offer a fine chance for the new administration to start redeeming its promises of change.

The State Department should unequivocally signal the Salvadoran Government that fraud will no longer be rewarded. Carter may hesitate to antagonize the Russians with too open criticism of their human rights violations; but with little risk he could use undeniable American power to encourage honest elections in El Salvador. If he did so, and then warmly welcomed the results—whatever they might be—it would be a sign that he really means to implement his commitment to a more open and decent foreign policy.

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The Meany Faction

For the first time since 1952, when George Meany became president of the AFL, the power of the Meany faction in organized labor seems to be waning. If Lane Kirkland is installed as Meany's hand-picked successor, the process of change should accelerate. Kirkland lacks a strong personal base in the labor movement; he needs his patron's backing and Meany is getting no younger.

The building trades, long Meany's base of power, are in serious trouble. Once the elite of organized labor, the hard-hats now face a dismal situation; in some cities perhaps 30 per cent of them are unemployed. Their great patron in New York, Nelson Rockefeller, has retired from active politics; there will be no more Albany malls and World Trade Centers in the near future. Residents of San Francisco, up in arms over the "Manhattanization" of their city, hold the building trades unions and their officers (several hold key municipal posts) in large part responsible. To these unions more high-rise buildings mean more jobs; besides, most of the members live in the suburbs and do not have to pay the higher property taxes that have come with Manhattanization.

And since in most cities there seems, for the moment at least, to be a surplus of high-rise space, it will be difficult to support the hard-hats in the manner to which they have grown accustomed. Even if the construction of individual homes and apartments picks up, much of the activity will be in nonurban areas where the building trades unions are not well represented.

It is also unlikely that the Meany faction, despite its support of Carter, has as much power today in Washington as it did under Nixon and Ford. The fact that Ray Marshall, not John T. Dunlop, has been named Secretary of Labor, and that Schlesinger was not chosen as Secretary of Defense, reflects President Carter's awareness that he cannot lean heavily on Meany. Marshall is closer to the UAW than to the Meany faction, and the sharp AFL-CIO reaction to Carter's two-year economic stimulus program also reflects Meany's loss of influence.

Other factors have weakened the old guard's position. The East Coast maritime unions are in serious trouble. The government is taking a close look at some of their operations; in any case, their influence is not what it was and the effect is to weaken the Meany faction. The Teamsters have long supported Meany on many issues, but that union is also in trouble; its pension plans are being looked into, as well as its ties to criminal elements. The death of Mayor Daley, an old ally, is as heavy a blow to Meany's people as the political retirement of Nelson Rockefeller. Also a recent Supreme Court decision that casts doubt on the legality of any federal law requiring local governments to bargain with unions is a challenge to organized labor at a time when the municipal unions are trying to bargain with bankrupt or nearly bankrupt cities. Other signs of changing labor times are the confused situation in the United Mine Workers and Ed Sadlowski's insurgent candidacy in Steel.

Time may be running out on another main prop to Meany's authority. For years the big unions have exercised their power along lines parallel to that of the large corporations, so that the cost of labor settlements has simply been passed on to the public, after what Galbraith calls "a few ritual threats and insults." But inflation is making it harder to conduct these wage-hike rituals. And many unions are alarmed by the evidence that multinational corporations are "exporting" jobs which might otherwise go—or so they think—to their members. At the moment organized labor has no policy, much less a program, to cope with the problem. The overseas expansion of the multinationals is, in many instances, an aspect of cold-war policies; and Meany's close ties with "anti-Communist" elements in South Korea and Taiwan make it no easier for him to formulate a policy. Finally, a majority of the American people now live in the Southern and Western states. This shift of population and economic resources raises serious organizational problems for the labor movement and demands a new leadership.

Meany's position as undisputed boss of the American labor movement and its chief spokesman in Washington dates almost from the inception of the cold war. Since 1952 the industrial and financial establishments, and the military-industrial-intelligence complex, have sought the cooperation of the big unions to advance cold-war strategies. Meany and those close to him have been enthusiastic partners in this joint enterprise and the membership of the unions they represent has reaped substantial rewards at the public's expense. Often the benefits have been at the expense of unions not directly related to the defense programs and of unorganized workers, who are a larger percentage of the work force than labor's official statistics ever concede. Now a change is taking place in the cold war and the Meany faction is no longer an indispensable ally. Indeed, it may be an encumbrance. The position Meany represents is more closely linked to Ronald Reagan's thinking on foreign policy than to President Carter's.

So, for all these reasons, this may well be Meany's last year as "boss." Whether it is not not, his influence is waning. The implications are important for the labor movement, and they may also signal a realignment of forces within that movement which could initiate major changes in national politics. CAREY MCWILLIAMS

CHOU EN-LAI'S CORTEGE

JAMES ARONSON

As part of its campaign against the "Gang of Four," the Chinese Government and press have stressed the role of one of the four, Yao Wen-yuan, in "denigrating Premier Chou En-lai." After the Premier died on January 8, 1976, the Peking People's Daily *said on January 18, 1977, Yao "tried in a thousand ways to sabotage the publicity of his funeral. . . . He imposed a strict ban on [television] shots showing a million people in the capital lining the main thoroughfare to pay homage to the Premier as the hearse moved from the hospital to the crematory." There*

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undoubtedly will be more information eventually on the allegation, but on the assertion that there was an outpouring of people I can testify personally. I was in Peking January 8-13, 1976, with my wife, an American born and raised in China. We were caught up in the mourning for Chou which surpassed in intensity any similar event in my thirty-five years as a journalist. One particular episode remains vivid. A description, taken from notes made immediately thereafter, follows.

We returned to Peking late this cold and brilliant Sunday afternoon from the Great Wall. As our small Chinese car made its way up the street alongside our Peking Hotel, it was halted, with all others, short of the intersection with the Avenue of Eternal Tranquillity. The traffic jam was unusually severe, but the perennial honking of cars threading their way through the thousands of bicycles was missing. Hundreds of persons were gathering at every vantage point of the intersection. The police, generally little seen, were out in great numbers, particularly the white-sleeved traffic police with their batons. Alongside were soldiers, men and women, of the People's Liberation Army.

We got out of the car to ask what was happening. No one knew, but the prevalent rumor was that it had to do with the services for Chou. We walked to the corner. All traffic had been halted on the avenue too, and on every street leading into it. Buses jammed with passengers were stalled in lines close to the curb. Cyclists stood by their bikes peering down the avenue in the direction of Tien An Men gate, a mile or so distant.

We went up to our hotel room on the fifth floor and out onto the balcony directly overlooking the great intersection. By now thousands had gathered. Police and PLA soldiers, none armed, were linked in a human barrier across the avenue. The silence was overwhelming.

Then a rumbling murmur rose from the crowd as a large black limousine moved slowly up the street from the opposite intersection and turned left into the avenue toward Tien An Men. All eyes were fixed on it and the open car—with either press or security—which followed. The third vehicle was a white van with black and yellow streamers; it carried the body of the Premier.

A great moan went up from the crowd; sobbing was heard everywhere. There followed a slow-paced procession of at least fifty cars carrying (as we learned later) the highest officials of the party and government. As the cars made the turn, the vast throng at the intersection facing down toward Tien An Men grew restless and surged against the police lines. They obviously wanted to follow the body, and the police, under equally obvious instructions, had been told to keep the avenue clear. They ordered the buses, still filled with people, to move across the avenue and block the crowds. The maneuver was accomplished with skill and remarkably even temper, but the people in the streets clearly did not care for it.

When the last car had proceeded about 100 yards down the avenue, the police ordered the barricading buses to move down a side street; at the same time, they broke their own line. The crowd moved forward, first as a mass, then becoming a stream as individuals began to sprint after the mobile procession.

An orange sun was sinking as thousands of persons, all on foot, made their way to the great square. Cyclists walked beside their bikes, sounding their plaintive tinkling bells in an evening song of mourning. Almost everyone was weeping—the walkers and the thousands more who remained watching from the broad sidewalks, seemingly too drawn into their private grief to join the procession.

For an hour, oblivious to the evening cold, we watched the people move down the avenue. We were beginning to absorb the mood of preoccupation so prevalent in Peking—a mood of personal mourning as well as of national sorrow. Everyone knew that a remarkably compassionate human being had gone—one who had somehow played a significant part in their personal lives.

James Aronson, journalist and author, is professor of communications at Hunter College of the City University of New York.

SCIENCE IS NO GENTLEMEN'S CLUB

Lessons of the Swine Flu Debacle

GEORGE A. SILVER, M.D.

Despite the babel of argument and accusation surrounding the swine flu program and its suspension, reinstitution and eventual dissolution, there is more to be considered than the rights and wrongs of the program itself. While the effects of the swine flu episode are not yet fully known (and perhaps never *will* be known), it may be instructive to peel away the journalistic and political veneer in order to examine the social and scientific attitudes that contributed to, if they did not cause, the tragicomic sequence of events. After all, the original decision to carry out the mass vaccination on a national scale, and the difficulties encountered along the way, reflect social policy and medical/professional social philosophy.

It was just over twenty years that a somewhat parallel situation occurred and John Rowan Wilson thereafter wrote *Margin of Safety* to describe, analyze, make judgments and assign blame. The tragic consequences of the Salk vaccine imbroglio bear retelling insofar as they include elements reminiscent of the present swine flu vaccine controversy.

For Wilson, a mixture of stubborn scientific arrogance

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and political maneuvering, limited professional capability, public ignorance and excessive public awe of the scientific establishment were responsible for the polio disaster. He virtually exculpates the industry, in that vaccine production faithfully followed professional instruction and the testing faithfully conformed to government regulation.

The strain that resulted in the deaths from polio vaccine was known to be maverick, probably untameable; though killed in the laboratory, it was capable of resurrection. But the scientist who pointed this out was a rival of the developer of the vaccine and it was hard not to suspect that professional jealousy affected the objectivity of his criticism. The evaluation tests prescribed by the government were obviously not sensitive enough to guarantee safety. The foundation that had heavily subsidized the discoverer wanted the "show on the road," and was impatient with any delay that might enable another discoverer or inventor to seize the limelight and the historic role.

For those who had the government responsibility the consequences of the Salk vaccine tragedy were drastic. In April 1955, hundreds of children who were given the dangerous vaccine contracted the disease, and many of them died. The investigative report was delivered to HEW in June. The Secretary of HEW resigned in July and the director of the National Institutes of Health shortly thereafter. The Surgeon General of the Public Health Service elected early retirement to drug industry employment the following year. It is unlikely that the consequences for the protagonists in the swine flu case will be as devastating. Almost the entire scientific medical community concurred in the decision, if not in all its details. The swine flu story is less susceptible to precise impeachments.

Nevertheless, some of the same elements, even the same actors, are on the scene. The danger is that the credibility of the scientific community, and particularly the medical research part of it, will be so discredited that a number of important measures which need to be taken will be subjected to obstructive constraints, delays and perhaps even abandonment. National preventive programs and the development of a national health program may be dangerously deferred.

In the cases of both polio and swine flu, the instigation to vaccinate came from the scientific community. In both instances, the public was alarmed by the specter of a plague; in both instances little objection came from knowledgeable sources.

In February 1976, a few cases of "swine flu"—one of them fatal—appeared among Army recruits in Fort Dix, N.J. Epidemiologists know that influenza pandemics (worldwide epidemics) occur periodically as a result of unpredictable changes in the ordinary virus, and that these changes make the virus less responsive to successful vaccination with known antigenic strains. The pandemics usually begin with small, unheralded flare-ups, like the New Jersey mini-epidemic. A year later, more and more cases may appear in more and more parts of the world, until virtually every country has had an epidemic; that makes it pandemic.

The New Jersey episode triggered a countrywide alarm because this was "swine flu," the strain generally thought responsible for the major lethal pandemic of 1918-19. That scourge is said to have killed 20 million people worldwide, more than 500,000 in the United States alone. No flu pandemic since then has approached the 1918-19 one for virulence or deadliness. The possibility that the Fort Dix outbreak presaged a worldwide attack by this killer strain had to be taken seriously.

The Center For Disease Control in Atlanta is the nation's headquarters for epidemic intelligence on, and oversight of, infectious disease. It maintains an "early warning system" that depends on epidemiologists in state health departments and elsewhere, who report regularly on the incidence of many customary diseases and on any unusual occurrences. When the Fort Dix cases came to his attention, the director of the Center immediately canvassed his staff, other government agencies and outside consultants on the magnitude of the threat and the steps to be taken.

The ensuing events are well-known. Scarcely a month later, President Ford dramatically announced an immediate massive program of vaccine production, to be followed by an unprecedented mass vaccination program of "every man, woman and child in the U.S." A few voices were raised in objection (not so many as the I-told-you-so's who have appeared recently); a key scientist who favored the mass vaccination nonetheless estimated the chance of an epidemic at less than 2 per cent. Some newspapers accused Ford of a political ploy in an election year, but it was the rare newspaper that could articulate opposition to the massive scientific approval. Some conservatives thought $135 million too much for the preventive campaign. The insurance companies, which apparently never take risks with their "risk capital," insisted upon government co- or reinsurance before they would cover the manufacturers. The manufacturers, true to form, wouldn't move until the government had guaranteed that the money would be available and the insurance in place. Also, they had no intention of converting other lucrative enterprises to vaccine manufacture and held off until the money was available to build new plants and equip them, so that they could produce "at cost"—and inherit the plants for future production.

No one could predict the course of the epidemic if there was to be one. Early spring always marks the end of flu anyway, so if the swine strain was a real threat it would not explode over the country until the late fall or winter. The handful of swine flu cases could have been a freak, or as some suggested, a disease common in these parts, but never before uncovered by tests. Still, we wouldn't be able to know anything for sure until months had passed and after who knew how many deaths. What was an appropriate public policy?

The options open to the scientists (and only scientists were engaged in this analysis) were as follows:

(*1*) *Ignore the whole matter.* We aren't even sure that swine flu was responsible for the 1918-19 epidemic. We couldn't say that the epidemic, if it did come, would be any more lethal than others we had been through in the

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past twenty years—Hong Kong, Type A, Victoria. Nor are we at all certain that flu vaccines are effective.

(*2*) *Manufacture a small amount of vaccine.* Don't invest too much money, just get enough vaccine on the way so that if there is an epidemic the drug companies can swing into vaccine production as needed. The risk is that a program for immunizing everybody will not be in place, and that trying to get it going in a few weeks would be impossible. Furthermore, talking about converting drug company capability to swine flu vaccine production is ludicrous. They would have to stop producing something else that is needed and lose money in the process; besides, the production engineering and equipment involved aren't that easily interchangeable.

(*3*) *Manufacture and stockpile all the vaccine needed.* The danger of not having a vaccination program in place is still there. The confusion and delay incident to getting one started in an emergency situation may cost lives.

(*4*) *The President's plan.* Manufacture all you need and put a vaccination program in place immediately. If there should be an epidemic, the American people will be protected. If not, $135 million has been invested in prevention.

While many second guessers now claim that they proposed (*2*) or (*3*) or even (*1*) the record is unambiguous: the newspapers and magazines and the conference reports from Atlanta make it evident that last spring the distinguished scientists and experts were in favor of (*4*). The public went along. As the year progressed with no new cases reported, when it became virtually certain that no epidemic would occur, when some old people died soon after being vaccinated, and cases of Guillain-Barré ("French polio") appeared, other scientific voices began to be heard. Then the public became restless. *Then,* the newspapers began referring to the swine flu program as a "debacle." The woods were full of I-told-you-so's.

For the record, perhaps, it should be noted that the health officer in New Jersey who had reported the original cases and Ralph Nader's Health Research Group adopted position (*3*) from the start. And the Public Health Service's director of the Bureau of Biologics espoused (*1*). He didn't think there would be an epidemic; moreover, he didn't think highly of the influenza vaccines. But, generally speaking, and as Lord Melbourne noted quite a while ago, what all the damn fools said would happen did happen, what the wise men foresaw did not. The campaign lagged; less than half the adult population showed up for the shots. Early in the game, parents were warned of possible danger to the young. The epidemic never appeared. Nowhere in the world was another case of swine flu identified in 1976. Deaths associated with the vaccination began to be reported, but the investigations were hurried and the findings inconclusive. Most recently, word has come of paralysis and even death from the rare and imperfectly understood Guillain-Barré disease.

However reluctantly, the news media supported the mass vaccination program. *Science,* the journal of record for the scientific community, and often critical of the scientific community, held its fire. Philip Boffey, himself a long-time critic of the scientific mandarins, wrote in *Science*: "The wisdom of the decision is difficult to assess. In a sense, the participants took what was probably the easiest decision under the ambiguous circumstances. The consequence of a failure to vaccinate followed by a pandemic of swine flu seemed far worse to most decision makers than the consequences of a vaccination campaign that later turned out to be needless. 'We're betting dollars against lives,' became a by-word of the participants." Boffey goes on to point out what the partisans stood to gain and what the critics thought might be lost, but he avoids coming to grips with the issue. Writing when he did he could dismiss the topic with the objectivity of the observer from Mars: "Health officials won't know until next fall or winter whether a large outbreak of swine flu actually occurs."

The virtual unanimity of the scientific community has to be seen in the perspective of the need to make a decision. For the past decade, medical and scientific workers, along with doctors, have felt themselves under increasing criticism, in part for their arrogant refusal to acknowledge public accountability (experts know best); in part for raising unfulfilled and unfulfillable expectations. Disease, mortality, chronic illness, need for and cost of medical care have not lessened, despite heavy social investment. Media exploitation of "cures," "threshold of discovery," dramatic and exaggerated stories also played their part.

Wilson is quite forthright about this problem in *Margin of Safety*. He writes, "Science began as a hobby for gentlemen; . . . in the middle of the 20th century it became something else." The "something else" he saw was science as a race, a contest between individuals and among organizations for prestige and laurels.

In his view, the polio vaccine catastrophe is ascribable very largely to personal rivalries among scientists, and to public competition for dominance (and financial support) among universities and foundations. Science, he feels, should not be "a race in front of a vast, emotional and incompletely informed public audience. Scientists are human, and it is just as easy for them to get excited and lose their heads as it is for anyone else to do so. They can be tempted to such undesirable practices as cutting corners, denigrating their opponents, or trying to build up a special relationship with the referee. They can become dependent upon their supporters and unbalanced about their opponents." He concludes, with some bitterness, "Science is a continuous process and does not provide winning posts."

While this element was not as evident in the swine flu vaccine case, it certainly played a part. Boffey, in the article quoted, says: "Many of those who joined the bandwagon would find a vaccination campaign congenial for professional or institutional reasons. The health bureaucrats in charge of the war would enjoy an infusion of funds into their agencies and the spotlight of public attention; the scientists would have a chance to test immunization theories and new vaccines; the drug industry would reap profits and perhaps develop a broader market for future vaccines; and the politicians could champion the public health."

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Wilson also turns his attention to the lay public in assessing the blame for the polio vaccine tragedy. We have bought the scientist's own dramatization of his role: selfless, dedicated, working only for the public good, underpaid, hard-working, more intelligent than the average. Most of us have grown up in the century of science, when all is possible, science will find the answer—plague, cancer, the conquest of space, oil shortages. And the scientist, particularly the research scienstist, is working for *us* in this role. Wilson writes, "the essential balance required to hold down the romantic ebullience of 'popular science' is missing." He goes on to deflate the myth of the researcher as superman. They suffer from a tendency to sanctify their work because it carries modest remuneration, despite heavy academic investment and "confers incidental benefits on humanity." They are intelligent people, he admits, doing creative work; but it is socially prestigious activity, and they are able to work in their field of interest. Consequently they are no more making sacrifices than are actors or novelists. Nor is their decision-making free of self-interest, with the leaders of the profession "chained to ritual" and the profession as a whole displaying an "unhealthy reverence for great men."

In short, we have learned from bitter experience in this century, what perhaps we should have learned millennia ago, that we dare not put our complete and total trust in experts; that perhaps even the wisest of courses prescribed by the wisest of experts will benefit from the examination and consideration of ordinary people. If war is too important to be left to the generals, if civilian control of the military is our political credo, what of science, medical science and scientific decision making?

Scientists, physicians, like other herd members, hesitate to challenge the group within which they work or travel. Although a few rebels may defy the rule, it takes popular and political pressures to bring about many scientific changes. The promotion of legislation to protect uranium miners, asbestos miners and to compensate coal miners for black lung was not undertaken by the scientific community. It was socially minded publicists who called attention to the dangers of X-rays, microwave radiation, pesticides. Too often the scientist honors his allegiance to the employer, industrial or governmental; the public, the client, the patient, is a secondary concern. For free, untrammeled inquiry, and for the scientists' own protection, it would appear that a public voice is needed to filter and focus scientific information into the policy process. President Ford's decision may have been political, but the course was urged upon him and his position on mass vaccination buttressed by scientific advisers.

The lessons implicit in the swine flu fiasco must be put to use. Only scientists can provide the sophisticated information required to meet natural and man-made challenges and threats. But more than scientific information has to go into the public policy decisions that flow from scientific information. If the dangers of future epidemics are to be averted, if the menace of pollution, of industrial hazards, are to be overcome and eliminated, public confidence in science and medicine must be maintained at a high level. That can come only from a cooperative endeavor in which scientists and the public share. We need more scientists to "blow the whistle"; but, much more than that, we need more public input into scientific decision making, so that the need for "whistle blowing" may be minimized.

Popular favor for science, Wilson points out, "oscillates between fatuous adulation and unreasoning suspicion." Public ignorance and lack of participation in the scientific decision making are responsible for both effects. If we are to avoid the charge of "government ineptitude" or "bureaucratic inefficiency" as reasons for rejecting scientific and medical judgments, it can be only by such partnership. If we are to avoid the spectacle of the scientific community seizing upon transient opportunities like the swine flu vaccine to bolster its flagging reputation with the public, it will be only by such partnership.

Episodes like this must, and can, be aborted early. Decisions were made in scientific conclaves, specially selected, in Atlanta; in conferences in the board room of HEW; in laboratory chambers at Bethesda and in medical schools. Newspaper reporters got such information as they could from press releases and interviews. Newspaper editorials were based on information released. The public was deprived of the participant role necessary to democratic action.

There is no reason to accept this as the "price" of scientific progress. More widespread scientific education in the last several decades has produced a knowledgeable public, with considerable understanding of basic science and scientific principles. It is doubtful that we can ever curb the competitive aspect of scientific investigation—or that we should want to curb it altogether. But more open decision making may dampen it, even in an acquisitive society. Nor am I sure that Socialist societies suffer any less from scientific adventurism. Do we have more Sloan-Kettering fabrications than they have Lysenkos? It is of some interest, however, that the science policy process in Great Britain, Sweden and the Soviet Union, to name but three countries in which civilians have a powerful role in science decision making, rejected both the Salk vaccine in the initial stages and the swine flu vaccine, neither stockpiling nor preparing for massive vaccination.

Science and scientists in the United States *need* public counsel, advice and support to review information coming from the field, put it into the perspective of the client and the patient, and then feed it back to the scientists so that the views and responses are considered in advance of massive field trials, large-scale programs. A monitor from the public sector is desperately needed.

We talk about embarking on national health programs of considerable magnitude and at enormous public expense. If there is to be such a program, it shouldn't repeat the system errors foisted on us by the professionals with sententious reference to medical ritual and the sanctity of the calling. Costly but ineffective systems are too heavy a price to pay for professional approval. Voices for local and civilian control also need to be heard. Science can serve the public interest only if the public is a party to scientific decision making. □

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'JEWS AND LEFTISTS TREMBLE'

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA

HARRY MAURER

¶January 13: A building housing a Yiddish daily newspaper is daubed with inscriptions reading "Out Jewish Invaders."

¶March 27: Armed men claiming to be police invade the home of a Jewish doctor. After interrogating and beating his family they leave, but not before scrawling on the wall, "Jews and Leftists Tremble, We Shall Return."

¶August 4: More than twenty Jewish-owned shops in several Jewish neighborhoods are machine-gunned, along with a Jewish school and bank.

¶September 3: Bombs are found in a Jewish-owned shopping center and in the building of a major newspaper whose editor is Jewish.

¶Throughout the year, bookstores and kiosks are flooded with cheap editions of Nazi classics such as Hitler's *My Enemies Are Yours*, Goebbels's *Hitler or Lenin* and Gottfried Feder's *The Jews*.

Such incidents might seem to have been culled from a history of Germany in the 1930s; in fact, they occurred last year in Argentina, along with dozens of other assaults that constituted one of the ugliest eruptions of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust. For eighteen months Argentine Jews were pilloried in print and maligned on television. Jewish leftists were hunted and tortured with special gusto by terror squads. Bombings and shoot-ups of Jewish establishments rose to a peak late last summer. Then, in October—shortly after the U.S. Congress held hearings on human rights in Argentina, and after a series of meetings between American Jewish leaders and high Argentine officials—the attacks ceased. Since then, and although the most scurrilous racist literature remains on the stands, Argentine Jews have developed a nervous optimism that the worst is over. Some of them even support the same military junta that apparently controls the anti-Semitic groups—which is only one of the paradoxes spawned by the nighmarish social crisis that Argentina has suffered since 1973.

The Argentine Jewish community numbers around 400,000 in a total population of 23 million—by far the largest group of Jews in Latin America. They came in three waves: during the late 19th century, when the German Baron de Hirsch bought tracts of *pampa* land and helped Eastern European Jews emigrate to that fertile expanse of the New World; during the years between World Wars, from various European countries, especially Nazi Germany; and after World War II. Many Jews of the second and third waves saw Argentina as a stepping-stone to the United States but never took the next step. They liked Argentina's European character, and they assimilated well. Today, 85 per cent of them live in Buenos Aires. Although most urban Jews have worked their way into the middle class and the professions, Argentina is unusual among Latin American countries in that it harbors many poor Jews. A few Jewish families attained wealth in industry, banking, finance and agriculture.

The historical roots of anti-Semitism, like those of Judaism itself, go deep in Argentine society. The traditional ruling alliance of clergy, military and native aristocracy (the great landowners of Spanish descent) never looked kindly on the Jews, but did not often molest them. Children of wealthy Jews who attended school with the young blue-bloods suffered social ostracism, but over the years were increasingly accepted. The Jewish community was never confined to a ghetto or widely hated.

The Jews did live through bad times during World War II because Argentina, while officially neutral, openly favored the Axis and was governed by a junta whose extreme nationalism and authoritarianism were modeled after Mussolini's Italy. Juan Domingo Perón, who seized power in 1945, had Fascist leanings, and may have opened the way to more violent anti-Semitism by welcoming a horde of Nazis after the war. But Perón, paradoxically, also was remarkably hospitable to Jews fleeing the wreckage of Europe. And his overt Fascist tendencies waned during his ten years in power, since his regime was based on his pose as the man who would lead the Argentine working class to power and prosperity.

Following Perón's fall in 1955 a series of civilian and military governments staggered across Argentina's stage, none of them able to solve economic problems that bred fierce political conflict. Civilian regimes could not contain within a stable democracy the demands of the country's highly organized (and solidly Peronist) workers; and the armed forces, who ousted civilian Presidents whenever the Peronists appeared to be making a comeback, could impose only momentary order before abdicating in the face of intractable economic dilemmas. A chronic, steadily deepening crisis thus afflicted the country for more than two decades, with the social fabric from time to time threatening to unravel altogether.

It was at those times that anti-Semitism tended to become overt. The worst outbreak before the most recent one came in 1966, when the military under Gen. Juan Carlos Onganía took power and savagely suppressed Peronists and leftists. The flurry of anti-Semitic incidents that accompanied the repression soon ended, but strong racist currents remained. In 1969 a publishing house in Bariloche, the Andean resort where many Nazis took refuge, began circulating neo-Nazi books by one Juan Maler, in German and Spanish editions. In 1971 appeared an anonymous pamphlet that purported to describe a secret Jewish plan to bring chaos to Argentina and then carve off the southern portion of the country for a Jewish state to be called "Andinia." The pamphlet was mailed to

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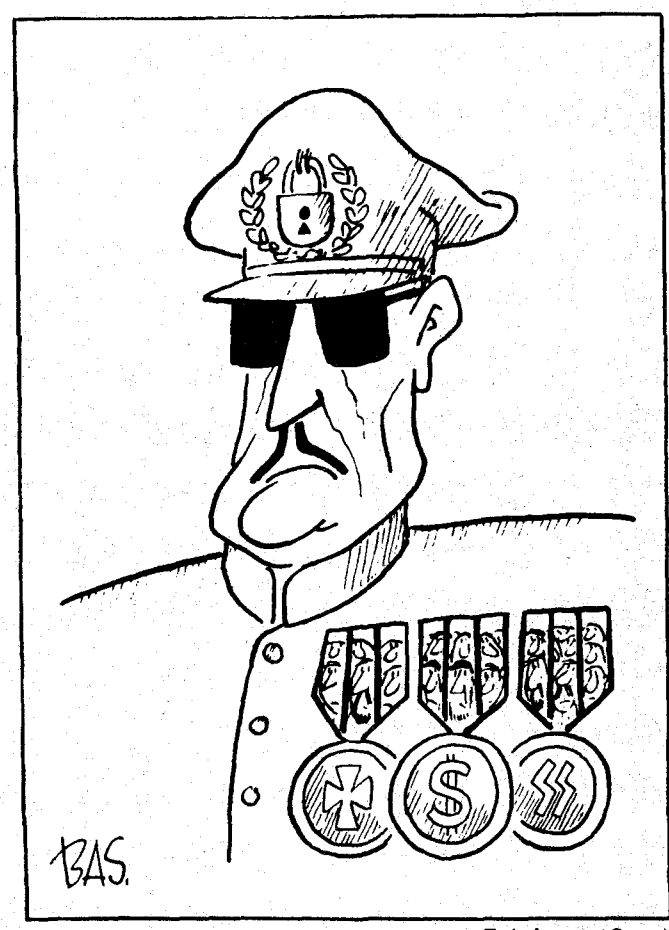
military officers and university students, and caused a minor furore.

But it was not until Perón returned in 1973 that Argentina's socioeconomic crisis and its reflection, anti-Semitism, began building to a climax. Perón was eagerly awaited after seven years of repressive military rule that had seen inflation and political terrorism rise while the general standard of living fell. But Perón had long since lost his ability to please all factions of his absurdly heterogeneous movement. When his rightist outlook became obvious, left-wing Peronists, mostly young, flocked into the Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army, which had succeeded the Tupamaros as the most effective guerrilla organizations on the continent. Bombings, assassinations and attacks on army bases increased. The economy, after a brief improvement, again spiraled downward. Perón countered with repression. And as the political polarization grew more extreme, so did the tendency to blame the trouble on the Jews.

At first the venom was confined to print. As Ted Cordova-Claure noted recently in *Atlas World Press Review*, "During the Peronist period magazines such as *Primicia Argentina* (Argentina First) and *El Caudillo* (The Leader) defended Franco, Mussolini and Hitler and attacked Masons, leftists and Jews." By early 1975, with Perón dead and his widow, Isabel, stranded in power like a shipwrecked sailor on a raft, *El Caudillo* had reached the point of printing a poem calling for a pogrom: "Nine at night is a good hour for this. . . . The place you already know: The Quarter of Usury. Wave a thousand truncheons, bloody a thousand heads . . . that all will be devastated."

On March 3, 1975 a synagogue was bombed. In April, the director of a government TV station was fired for showing the film *QB VII* (about a Nazi war criminal), which the newspaper *Ultima Hora* termed objectionable because it was "decidedly pro-Zionist and anti-Nazi." Later that month, government news agencies circulated a report from Spain that seriously discussed the "Andinia Plan." The walls of Mendoza were painted with swastikas and slogans such as "Be a patriot, kill a Jew." With the campaign now in full swing, at least forty-four other major attacks on the Jews—bombings, pamphlets, slanders on TV, inflammatory magazine articles—marked the next eighteen months.

Most disturbing was the appearance of anti-Semitic, Nazi and neo-Nazi books. A new edition of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* included the "Andinia Plan" pamphlet. *Jewish Argentina,* by Horacio Calderón, former press secretary of the University of Buenos Aires, and *Argentine Inflation 1946-1975,* by Walter Beveraggi Allende, contained the usual fantasies about the Jewish menace to the fatherland. Worst of all was the series published by the firm of Editorial Milicia, beginning in June 1975. Heavily advertised ("For the first time in Spanish!"), the Milicia books were mostly translations of classics from the Third Reich. *Francomasonry* by Dieter Schwarz, *The European SS*, by Untersturmführer Eric Arnald, and *We, the Racists* by G.A. Amaudruz, were



Tachydromos (Greece)

three of the nineteen titles in the "Library of Doctrinal Formation." Milicia's hardback series and their "Beyond Lies Collection" offered such jewels as *The Talmud Unmasked, Who is Behind Kissinger?* and *The SS in Action.*

Anti-Semitism was bad enough under Perón, but matters grew rapidly worse after the military coup led by Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla on March 24, 1976. As repression attained a rigor never before felt in Argentina—thousands of political prisoners seized, hundreds murdered, political parties and trade union activity banned, purges in professional institutions, etc.—anti-Semitic incidents proliferated and Jews who fell afoul of the police became the objects of special brutality. Jewish leaders report that political prisoners were treated much more harshly if they were Jewish. That is confirmed by eyewitnesses, including one woman who was tortured in a Buenos Aires safe house—one of the unofficial prisons maintained by security forces—and now lives in the United States. Anti-Semitism, she says, was like a disease among the military officers who ran the prison. She remembers in particular one couple who were tortured together, with the guards shouting at his wife, "Why did you marry this Jewish pig?"

How can one account for such a paroxysm of barbarity? The wellsprings of anti-Semitism are too complex to analyze here, but history has demonstrated that in countries with a large Jewish population, when economic and political struggle rises to the point of crisis, anti-Semitism

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inevitably mushrooms on the Right. Fascism *without* anti-Semitism would be inconceivable in Argentina. The tradition runs too deep, and the need for a scapegoat is too great.

One disturbing aspect of current anti-Semitism in Argentina is the possibility of Arab involvement. While the million Argentines of Arab descent have historically enjoyed warm relations with their Jewish compatriots, both Argentine and American Jews have recently suggested that Arab money is behind the mysteriously well-financed Nazi publishing houses, and that Arab propaganda has helped to foster an anti-Semitic atmosphere. There seems to be no evidence for the former assertion, but the latter may well be true. Argentina depends on Arab oil, and has politically favored the Arabs since the OPEC price hikes. As a result, official statements on the Middle East tend to have pro-Arab shadings. In 1975, for example, the government TV network broadcast two shows on Libya and Syria, during which the participants (who included the ambassadors of those countries) made several dubious statements, among them the claim that Israel was created by an international conspiracy that "uses Judaism as a screen" for its goal of "economically dominating the world." Such a remark may fall into the gray area between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, but various articles published in *Asuntos Arabes* (Arab Affairs), a glossy propaganda magazine circulated widely in Argentina, stray far into the realm of classic Jew-baiting.

Arab involvement aside, the fundamental question about Argentina's spasm of anti-Semitism is the extent to which its ideology is shared and its cadres encouraged, sponsored, or even directed by the government. The evidence suggests that at the least there are sympathetic elements within the junta. The Argentine military has long inclined toward anti-Semitism. Julio de Meinveille, the late anti-Semitic priest and author of *The Jew in the Mystery of History,* was the spiritual adviser to several high-ranking officers. Anti-Semitism is rife within the police and the terror squads linked to the regime. When the government made a gesture last September by closing Editorial Milicia and banning six of its titles, the company immediately reappeared with a new name, Odal, which continues to flood the best booksellers with Nazi works. Government ministries have placed ads in neo-Fascist magazines, and government press agencies, television and radio have circulated anti-Semitic calumnies.

Even more telling is the apparent link between external pressure on the junta and the sharp decline in attacks on Jews. During the summer of 1976, as incidents multiplied, a protest campaign gathered force in Argentina and abroad. In July and August members of the influential Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations met with the Minister of the Interior and the head of the federal police to express their concern. The officials said they also were upset and would do what they could. There was no improvement in August. In September, however, American Jewish groups took concerted action. On September 6, members of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith met with then Argentine Ambassador to the United States, Arnaldo Musitch. On September 28-29, hearings on Argentina were held by Rep. Donald Fraser's Subcommittee on International Organizations, and Burton Levinson of the ADL presented testimony about the anti-Semitic violence. On October 7, members of the American Jewish Committee met with the Foreign Minister of Argentina and the Ambassador to the United Nations.

At these meetings the Argentines argued that the Videla government was not anti-Semitic but was helpless to stop the fringe groups who were. They also pleaded for understanding of the fact that Argentina was "at war" with internal subversion and could not afford to be dainty. Nevertheless, the meetings were followed by a change that can hardly have been coincidental. Assaults on Jews tapered off in September, and on the 13th the decree closing Editorial Milicia was published. On Rosh Hashana, September 25, one bombing was reported. On Yom Kippur, ten days later, there were only scattered bomb threats. After that no major incidents were reported for three months. The January 8th bombings of a Jewish school and a businessman's house, and a January 14th bombing of a theatre showing the film *Victory at Entebbe* appear to have been isolated events.

Ironically, then, official ties to anti-Semitic groups in Argentina were most convincingly demonstrated by the junta's ability to restrain those groups. But why did Videla tolerate rampant anti-Semitism in the first place? Some of his military cohorts were certainly anti-Semitic, and others perhaps felt that the difficult circumstances required a scapegoat. But the Argentine government has never been *officially* anti-Semitic—a crucial difference from the Third Reich. It seems most likely that the generals, in their war of terror against the Left, saw that the anti-Semites could be useful allies and did not want to alienate them. However, Videla also hoped to avoid the diplomatic isolation suffered by the Chilean regime as a result of its human rights violations. One can therefore guess that he tolerated anti-Semitism as long as it seemed to serve his purpose, but when it began to reflect badly on his regime, particularly in the country to the north that props him up, he saw that the price of ignoring bombed synagogues was too high.

Another, more unfortunate irony lies in the contradictory position of what might be called the Argentine Jewish establishment—the wealthy, conservative Jews in industry, trade and the professions. On one hand they face a government that has amply shown its willingness to tolerate the persecution of Jews, and that is controlled by the armed forces, within which Jews have always been prevented from rising to the highest ranks. On the other hand lies a social crisis that has fostered terrible civil strife. Thus, conservative Jews fear Videla, but know that there are other generals who are worse; and they fear intensified social struggle, which threatens their economic interests. Caught between fascism and revolution, they have adopted a position of mildly unhappy support for the junta that has persecuted them, and live in terror of any event that might rekindle anti-Jewish flames. They now hope to achieve security by unobtrusive lobbying among the generals.

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"It's important to stress that the Argentine Jewish community is not suffering alone," says David Geller, head of the Latin American office at the American Jewish Committee's Department of Foreign Affairs. *"All* Argentines are suffering. And many Jews there are saying, 'We want order. We want what other Argentines want. We just want the killing to stop.' They believe the Videla government is a moderate one and should be strengthened." But this stand is dubious, even aside from the curious view of Videla as a "moderate" (a notion his regime has done its best to propagate). For example, the argument generally advanced in Argentina and by Jewish leaders in the United States for silencing Nazi publishers is that the junta *rightly* stifled the extreme leftist press, and now in the interests of order should do the same to the extreme Right. This amounts to a demand for violation of human rights as long as it's done even-handedly.

By backing the junta's war on the guerrillas as necessary to stamp out "violence" in the abstract, Argentine and American Jewish leaders have failed to appreciate the social roots of violence. Seven times since 1955 the military has violently intervened to prevent Argentina from taking a path not to the generals' liking. The guerrillas' bombings and kidnappings must be seen as a response, however inchoate and ineffective, to the unequal distribution of wealth, the contradictions of underdevelopment—and to the force employed by the government to preserve the status quo.

But not all Argentine Jews take the myopic view that social peace should be bought at any price; some know the price is always paid by the poor. While no statistics are available, sources agree that the Argentine left wing includes a disproportionate number of Jews. Jewish young people, in Argentina as elsewhere, attend university in high numbers, and the universities have been breeding grounds for guerrillas. The support of the "Jewish community" for Videla is by no means unanimous.

In short, Argentine Jews in this time of upheaval are divided along familiar age and class lines. But given the fact, as Burton Levinson remarks, that the treatment of Jews has historically served as a "moral barometer" of society, it is painful to find that *any* Jews, even those of the upper classes, support a neo-Fascist regime tainted with anti-Semitism. Economic interests, it would seem, cut deeper than religious identification. So it is left to the country's young and powerless, Jew and gentile, now crowded into jails and torture chambers, to struggle against the conditions which give rise to fascism—and which, unless they are radically changed, will almost certainly rouse the monster of anti-Semitism from its fitful sleep in years to come. □

THE PROLIFERATING ARMS INDUSTRY

AMERICA EXPORTS ITS KNOW-HOW

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Congress in June 1976 passed the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act. This important piece of legislation for the first time sets *conventional*—as distinct from *nuclear*—arms control as a major goal of the United States. The new law, which supplants the Foreign Military Sales Act of 1968, affirms that it shall be our policy "to exert leadership in the world community to bring about arrangements for reducing the international trade in implements of war and to lessen the danger of outbreak of regional conflict. . . ." To this end, Congress imposed new restraints on direct weapons exports and invested itself with veto power over major arms transactions. Unfortunately, however, it failed to establish any controls over the most dangerous aspect of the arms trade —the sale of military *technology* via co-production and licensing agreements.

Although America's technological "know-how" is considered a critical national resource, the dissemination of which must be tightly controlled, U.S. firms are finding more and more reasons to participate in multinational arms schemes. Such co-production normally entails the licensed production of a U.S.-designed weapon by a foreign firm, or by several firms that agree to produce separate components of a weapons system. The giant F-16 fighter program, for instance, will involve the licensed production of Pratt & Whitney's F-100 jet engine in Belgium, and the fabrication of other major components by a consortium of eighty-five firms in Holland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium and the United States. Similar projects are underway in a dozen other countries—including some underdeveloped nations—and industry leaders believe that such arrangements will increasingly supplant unilateral production. "Multinational cooperation in defense systems," Northrop President Thomas V. Jones declared recently, "is necessary, desirable, and inevitable."

The Department of Defense defines co-production as "any program wherein the U.S. Government . . . enables an eligible foreign government, international organization or designated commercial producer to acquire the 'know-how' to manufacture . . . a specific weapon, communications or support system, or an individual military item." Depending on the technical competence of the country involved, US. participation in such schemes can range from the submission of blueprints all the way to the design and construction of complete factories. According to documents that I obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, the Pentagon is now engaged in some forty

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major co-production projects abroad, worth an estimated $8.5 billion (in 1975 dollars). U.S. arms firms are involved in at least fifty more such ventures through direct commercial agreements. And while the Carter administration has promised to cut back on regular arms sales, it has said nothing about limiting these other arrangements.

Multinational arms ventures are inherently more dangerous than regular arms exports because they result in a *permanent transfer of military technology* to potential belligerents, thus establishing their ability to start and sustain a war with their own resources. Regular arms transfers result in only limited military autonomy, because the required spare parts and maintenance must be obtained from the original supplier. Transfers of technology render a country relatively invulnerable to international arms embargoes. They also enable America's overseas partners to enter the weapons business *on their own*, thus negating attempts to moderate the arms trade.

Countries which only a few years ago were armed with America's obsolete weapons, supplied through the Military Assistance Program (MAP), are now producing advanced missiles, aircraft and warships with U.S. assistance. And countries which have developed their own arsenals with American help have gone on to produce arms for the world market—in some cases selling U.S.-designed weapons to countries that are on our embargo list. These ventures are not, strictly speaking, illegal, but they often violate the spirit of U.S. law or public policy. Among the abuses that I uncovered in a six-month study are the following:

¶Aeronautica Macchi, an Italian affiliate of Lockheed, has sold its license-produced L-60 transport planes to the Rhodesian Air Force.

¶Construzioni Aeronautiche Giovanni Agusta, another Italian producer, is delivering U.S.-designed CH-47C Chinook troop-carrying helicopters to the Libyan Arab Air Force.

¶The Taiwanese Government has lined up considerable U.S. assistance for its drive to establish a full-scale domestic arms industry—even though Washington is officially committed to reducing American military involvement in Taiwan.

¶The 1975 Congressional embargo on military sales to Turkey did not stop Aeritalia, the Italian licensee, from delivering Lockheed F-104 Starfighters to the Turkish Air Force.

Given the growing popularity of multinational arms ventures—and the lack of effective Congressional oversight—it is obvious that such abuses will continue. Then, even if new controls are imposed in the years ahead, in accordance with the President's recent pledge, it will be too late to reverse the long-lasting effects of existing projects. As J. Fred Bucy noted in an influential Pentagon report, "The release of know-how is an irreversible decision."

The trend toward multinational arms production raises many questions about U.S. policy and the international weapons trade, but as yet no basic study has been made of this phenomenon. Therefore, the following overview and analysis of U.S. weapons production abroad is designed to provoke discussion of and action on the matter.

American firms got heavily involved in co-production projects in the early 1950s, when the United States sought to mobilize the industrial might of its allies for a global struggle against communism. To speed the fortification of NATO, Washington agreed to share its new military skills with its more capable partners. At first, these countries were invited to provide maintenance and servicing for U.S. aircraft stationed abroad; later, as they became more familiar with modern aerospace technology, they were invited to produce U.S. weapons under license.

Since Britain and France emerged from World War II with their arms industries relatively intact, Washington offered its co-production services to the other major non-Communist industrial countries: Germany, Italy and Japan. Thus, in their commitment to anti-communism, U.S. leaders disavowed one of the allies' principal war aims—the demilitarization of the Axis powers. Military plants that had been dismantled by the occupation authorities were restored, and American firms were encouraged to collaborate with their resuscitated counterparts in the production of advanced weapons. These partnerships have proven durable; today the three countries account (in dollar terms) for half of all U.S. co-production abroad.

German, Italian and Japanese firms will continue to claim a large share of U.S. military co-production work, but other industrial nations—particularly France and Britain—will account for an increasing share of such projects in the years ahead. Surprisingly, this trend has coincided with European moves toward an integrated arms industry that can better compete with American firms, but there are reasons for the apparent contradiction: on one hand, European producers recognize that they can no longer afford to stay current in all areas of military technology and thus must rely on American cooperation; on the other hand, they realize that the European market alone is too small to absorb the output of their factories and that some transatlantic collaboration is needed to insure access to the giant U.S. market.

These imperatives emerged with striking consistency at the 1976 aviation conference of the Western Economic Union (WEU). "We must act urgently to avoid disaster in Europe's aviation industry," WEU aviation chairman M. de Montesquieu warned. Only by keeping abreast of the latest technologies, he argued, could Europe hope to retain a viable aerospace industry. And, in the view of most officials present, this could be done only by pooling resources in Europe and building new links to the United States. "We need to develop the maximum technical strength in Europe," J. T. Stamper of Hawker-Siddeley Aviation Ltd. explained, "in order to be able to collaborate with the U.S.A. in a satisfactory and constructive way, and to avoid the risk, in the longer term, of total domination by the U.S.A. of the European market."

American firms also perceive an advantage in greater transatlantic collaboration (aside from the obvious desire to prevent formation of an all-European arms industry that would compete with the United States). By

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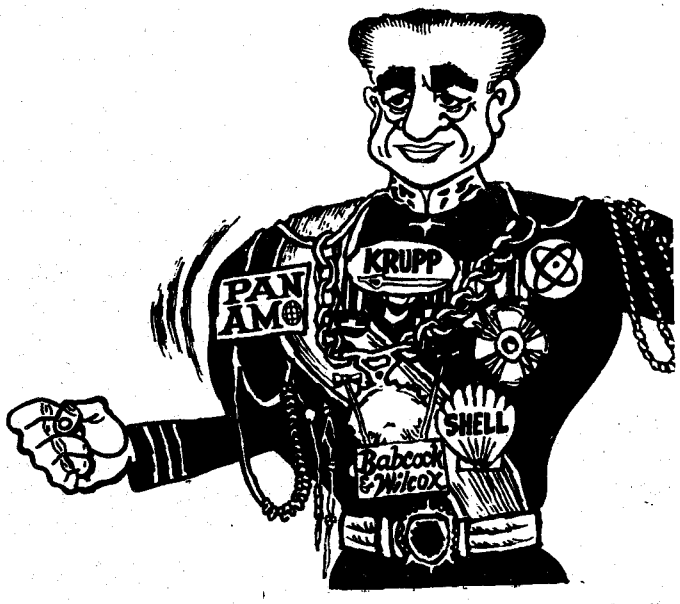

Margulies

establishing joint ventures with European producers, these U.S. companies hope to obtain substantial foreign funding for high-priority projects. Given the steady rise in development costs and continued recession in the aerospace industry, such outside financing is considered essential to bring along the next generation of aircraft systems. Co-production is also viewed as a way to line up advance orders for new products, since every government involved in such a project automatically acquires a stake in its success and can therefore be counted on to make some purchases for domestic use.

Pressure for increased collaboration is also coming from NATO's military commanders, who want arms standardized within the Alliance's armies. Although that has been a stated goal since NATO was formed, little progress has been made in twenty years and each major partner still produces its own tanks, aircraft and artillery. NATO strategists believe that this plurality of front-line weapons, coupled with the incompatibility of communications equipment, reduces combat effectiveness by 30 per cent. Duplication in arms development, moreover, costs the Alliance powers an estimated $10 billion annually.

These various motives have produced a significant increase of co-production. A star example is the five-nation, $2 billion F-16 fighter program described by *Aviation Week Space Technology* as "a significant milestone in improved NATO combat capability and weapons standardization." Other multinational ventures underway are the CFM56 turbofan engine project, involving General Electric and SNECMA (Société National d'Etude et de Construction des Moteurs d'Aviation) of France, and the Japanese version of the McDonnell-Douglas F-15 fighter, to be produced by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

Since all these projects involve the transfer of at least some military know-how to foreign powers, they must, as a matter of U.S. law, contribute to the collective defense and/or benefit the U.S. economy. Increasingly, however, America's co-partners harbor motives inconsistent with U.S. policy—namely, to acquire technologies that can be incorporated into their own lines of export hardware. This can be so even in NATO-sponsored standardization projects, since most European producers must export a significant share of their output in order to reach minimal economies of scale.

The resale of American military technology abroad has become a major government concern. U.S. policy makers say they are determined to retain control over the dissemination of American know-how, but the multinational arms projects undermine their authority. According to one State Department official I spoke with, the size of the problem became apparent in 1975, when the agencies charged with enforcing the Congressional ban on military exports to Turkey discovered that more than 180 foreign firms were authorized under existing licensing agreements to sell American military products to that country—in most cases without needing further approval from U.S. authorities.

The breakdown of U.S. control is perhaps best seen in Italy, which has become a major exporter of U.S.-designed weapons. Almost every major Italian arms firm has at least some ties to the U.S. military-industrial complex, and some have made a business of selling locally produced American weapons on the world market. Agusta, for instance, produces a full range of U.S. military helicopters —including models from Bell, Sikorsky and Boeing—for customers in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Recent purchases have been made by Morocco, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and, as mentioned earlier, Libya—a country closed to U.S. exporters by the Department of State. Most Agusta helicopters, including the Boeing Chinooks sold to Libya, are powered by U.S. turboshaft engines built in Italy under license.

As the scope of these activities sinks in, U.S. officials are certain to become less free-handed with technology transfers. However, it is often difficult to determine when a particular item of know-how is needed for legitimate defense purposes and when it is being sought for commercial reasons. Given the growing popularity of multinational arms ventures, therefore, it is obvious that new restraints on technology transfers are needed now if Washington is not to lose all control over such exports.

The need arises with even greater urgency though with different implications, in the case of arms production by the Third World. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the number of Third World nations producing at least some modern arms has risen from two in 1960 to eighteen in 1974. But while these countries seek a high degree of weapons self-sufficiency, they all lack at least some of the skills needed to sustain such ventures. As a result, U.S. arms firms are coming under increasing pressure to supply sophisticated military know-how to the more ambitious Third World powers.

U.S. involvement in their schemes presents a double danger. It improves the capacity of these countries to wage war; it also helps them create nascent military-industrial complexes which accelerate the trend toward

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authoritarianism in already militarized societies. Both developments forge new linkages with the United States.

When attempting to account for the sudden boom in Third World arms programs, most analysts cite nationalism as the principal motive. "Weapons factories," according to Jack Foise of the *Los Angeles Times,* are "the newest status symbol" for many underdeveloped countries. Even relatively poor countries like Indonesia and the Philippines, he notes, have announced their determination to establish a domestic arms capability. (While such allocations of scarce resources may appear irresponsible, many Third World leaders have been influenced by the assumption—so dominant in the West—that national security and economic "progress" are both dependent on a high rate of technological advance in the military sector.) But aside from such general considerations, these leaders perceive more pragmatic reasons for developing a domestic arms capability: *(1)* to obtain some protection against current or future arms embargoes; *(2)* to reduce hard-currency outlays on imported weapons, and *(3)* to stimulate the development of ancillary industries—electronics, metallurgy, chemicals, etc.—which benefit the civilian economy while contributing to defense production.

While many U.S. companies are reluctant to export their skills—particularly when that might contribute to increased competition in the future—an increasing number are being shown reasons to do so. Such collaboration has been solicited through offers of lucrative technical assistance contracts (as in the case of Lockheed's $250 million contract with Greece to develop a new aircraft industry), while in other cases it has been made a condition for regular arms purchases (as when Brazil insisted on a share of F-5E production before agreeing to buy forty-two of the aircraft).

Since the ostensible goal is to promote self-sufficiency, most co-production projects of this sort proceed in a multi-phased "learning cycle" to permit a gradual takeover of production processes by indigenous personnel. A country will begin by performing overhaul and maintenance work on its imported weapons under the supervision of foreign specialists. After thus acquiring some experience, it will attempt to *assemble* a foreign-designed weapon under license, using imported parts and materials. Next the country will begin to *fabricate* some of the components in local plants, usually with tools and equipment obtained from the original producer. Gradually more and more of the components will be produced locally until the weapon (still of foreign design) is entirely composed of indigenous components. It is only at this point that the country will have sufficient technical competence to *design* and produce its own weapons from scratch.

Today, very few Third World producers possess an indigenous design capability; most continue to rely upon external sources of support. (Indeed, as will be shown, they tend to become locked into a permanent technological dependence on foreign producers.) Though most advanced industrial nations have sought to profit from this phenomenon, the United States—as the leading supplier of arms to the Third World—has also become the major purveyor of technical military services. And topping the list of customers for services are Taiwan and Iran.

Taiwan: Arms self-sufficiency has been a critical national priority here ever since President Nixon visited China in 1972 and committed the United States to a gradual phase-out of military support for Taiwan. And while the United States has appeared to comply with this pledge with much-publicized troop withdrawals, it has expanded its support for Taipei's domestic arms program. Since 1972, Washington has approved four major co-production schemes worth some $408 million, and additional ventures are being considered. The biggest current project is the assembly of 100 Northrop F-5E fighters by the Aero Industry Development Center (AIDC) of the Nationalist Chinese Air Force. The AIDC is also producing 118 UH-1H troop-carrying helicopters under license from Bell, and the assembly of a more advanced aircraft —possibly General Dynamics' F-16 or Northrop's F-18— is being considered. The U.S. Army is also helping Taiwan produce M14 rifles, M60 machine guns, and related ammunition at its 60th government arsenal.

Iran: Although dependent on imports for his burgeoning military forces, the Shah has also announced ambitious plans for an indigenous arms capability. But, while Teheran speaks wistfully of self-sufficient arms production, most experts believe that its principal aim is to develop new high-technology industries. Thus Hughes Aircraft has been commissioned to build a $25 million electro-optical facility in Shiraz as the first stage in a proposed $1 billion electronics complex being set up by the state-owned Iran Electronics Industries. Northrop and the Iranian Government are partners in a similar venture with Iran Aircraft Industries of Teheran, which plans to produce aircraft components and eventually to assemble entire aircraft. Still another installation is taking shape in Isfahan, where Bell Helicopters will assemble some 400 Model 214A helicopters under contract to the Iranian Government.

Other Third World countries with substantial ties to the U.S. arms industry include Argentina, Brazil, Pakistan, the Philippines and South Korea. Greece will join this list in 1980, when Lockheed completes construction of a new aircraft plant at Tanagra, and Israel is expected to follow if Washington approves a plan for co-production of the F-16 fighter.

The growing demand for our participation in domestic arms ventures of this sort has raised considerable problems for U.S. policy makers. American officials hesitate to approve co-production projects that will reduce employment at home and/or increase competition for U.S. producers in other markets. The Pentagon is also worried that technology supplied to unstable regimes may some day fall into the hands of hostile or revolutionary forces. And, U.S. strategists fear that growing arms self-sufficiency in the Third World will reduce Washington's control over some of its more ambitious and independent-minded clients.

Despite these qualms, American policy makers tend to perceive more benefits than liabilities in supporting such endeavors. Indeed, it often happens that Third World pro-

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duction schemes produce results opposite to those intended by their sponsors. For, as long as a nation's general economic and social progress lags behind the advances in military technology being made elsewhere, it will be unable to acquire sufficient technical skills to take over all the tasks performed by the foreign partner. These projects then result in a condition of *permanent technological dependence* that provides long-term economic and political benefits for the United States.

Since most Third World producers lack the tooling and equipment for complex production schemes, they must acquire them abroad. And since industrial equipment of this sort tends to be more expensive than finished manufactured goods, U.S. firms often profit more from co-production projects than from direct sales of the same weapon. Thus Northrop will reap an estimated $235 million on its F-5E co-assembly venture in Taiwan, whereas a sale of the same number of aircraft would produce only $225 million. Similarly, while co-production work may reduce employment for factory workers at home, it often creates work for American technicians and engineers abroad—thus canceling out much of the job loss.

From the politico-military standpoint, the results can be equally wide of their mark. Instead of promoting increased self-sufficiency, domestic arms ventures appear to be producing increased dependency on external suppliers. For, given the multi-staged "learning cycle" described earlier, Third World producers will always trail the advanced countries in the absorption of new technologies, and thus be forced to import foreign components and materials if any degree of modernity in weapons capability is to be maintained. Officials at Northrop Aircraft estimate that the technology in a U.S.-designed weapon assembled abroad will be six to ten years old by the time a foreign producer has taken over full production; any attempt to reduce this technological lag will require increased external support, while any effort to reduce foreign support will increase the degree of obsolescence. As long as the advanced countries retain their monopoly over technological innovation, therefore, Third World producers will remain dependent on foreign technical support.

This analysis suggests that the switch from direct arms sales to technology transfers enhances rather than diminishes U.S. political influence abroad. By threatening to cut off supplies of critical materials and components, Washington can imperil an entire production line representing many millions of dollars in initial investment. Although such threats would obviously be made only in extreme situations, the mere *availability* of the option provides considerable leverage. And U.S. officials are well aware of this advantage: in a letter to then Vice President Spiro T. Agnew describing the Taiwanese F-5E project (also obtained under the Freedom of Information Act), Acting Assistant Secretary of State Marshall Wright affirmed that "the scope of the proposed co-assembly/co-production project will not give the ROC the independent technical capability to produce a complete aircraft. The ROC will be *dependent upon the U.S. for all vital components* and for technical support." (Emphasis added.) And a top Pentagon official put it even more bluntly in a recent interview: "Every co-production project requires some fundamental componentry from the United States, and this inevitably ties such arrangements to U.S. cooperation."

Clearly, then, the perceived advantages of co-production work outweigh any concern over the dangers implicit in such ventures. Indeed, the trend toward multinational arms production is being accelerated by compelling political and economic considerations in both the developed and underdeveloped areas. Thus, unless some powerful new factor is added to this equation, it is reasonable to conclude that an increasing number of U.S. firms will engage in co-production schemes in a growing number of countries.

This trend must cause great concern to anyone interested in arms control and world order. The development of new arms industries abroad obviously increases the *capacity for violence* available in the world. And since the introduction of any such facility in one country will create a demand for comparable facilities in all adjacent countries, the phenomenon has given birth to an upwardly spiraling arms-production race comparable to and interwoven with the existing conventional arms race. This fact alone suggests that future conflicts will be fought at higher levels of violence than were those of the past.

But the spread of military production capabilities affects not only the *level* of conflict but also the *likelihood* of conflict. The enhanced war-making potential of any one country increases the inclination of its rivals to launch a pre-emptive attack. If, however, no such attack is launched, the owners of the new facilities may feel emboldened to exploit their advantage by attacking a weaker rival; and whereas previously such aggression could be discouraged by an international arms embargo, now the existence of an indigenous weapons capability renders such measures increasingly ineffective. And even if these programs do not result in conflict, they clearly increase both the domestic and foreign sources of arms available to Third World producers, and thus complicate the task of establishing regional arms control arrangements.

The growing U.S. involvement in Third World arms ventures also introduces new exigencies into America's own policy making. By involving American firms in the weapons industries of militaristic regimes abroad, such projects exert considerable pressure on Washington to help preserve the status quo. Once these ties are institutionalized, moreover, it is very difficult for the United States to extricate itself without jeopardizing its relations with the other government involved—a consideration that is often cited by U.S. officials in defending the American military alliance with the Shah of Iran. (See Klare: "Hoist with Our Own Pahlavi," *The Nation*, January 31, 1976.)

Given this assessment of the dangers implicit in multinational arms ventures, it is natural to assume that Washington has adopted clear-cut policies governing their establishment. Yet an examination of existing statutes and

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regulations suggests an *absence* of policy. The only specific legislation in this area, Section 42 of the Foreign Military Act, affirms that "special emphasis shall be placed on procurement [of finished products] in the United States," but authorizes overseas production of U.S.-developed arms "when such production best serves the foreign policy, national security, and economy of the United States." Such determinations are left to the Secretary of State, who is merely enjoined to seek advice of the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) as to "the extent to which such sale might contribute to an arms race, or increase the possibility of outbreak or escalation of conflict, or prejudice the development of bilateral or multinational arms control arrangements." The Secretary is not constrained by such findings, however, and in any case it is impossible to determine what influence, if any, the ACDA wields, since the agency refuses to make its findings public.

Given this lack of guidance, it is not surprising that the State Department tends to evaluate such ventures on an ad hoc basis. Unusually controversial projects—such as those involving advanced technologies—are normally passed on to the National Security Council for final judgment, but in most cases the decision is left to State's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs (P.M.) working in conjunction with the appropriate country desk. The P.M. staff consults with representatives of other concerned government agencies, including the ACDA and the Pentagon, but they tend to approve a given project unless a persuasive threat to U.S. foreign policy is perceived. As one P.M. official told me, "We prefer to sell an item, not a factory. But if U.S. interests are best served by selling a factory instead of an item, we'll go ahead with the factory."

While this attitude may appear reasonable to government bureaucrats, it is unacceptable for anyone concerned about the proliferation of arms-making capabilities. If Congress is to persevere in its stated commitment to reduce "the international trade in implements of war," it will have to establish new controls on the export of military technologies. Similarly, if the Carter administration is sincere in its desire to cut back on military exports, it will have to include sales of military technology as well as the marketing of regular arms. If we fail to act now on this critical issue, we are certain to find ourselves in a much more violent and dangerous world. And soon. □

DON'T CALL IT TREASON

THE NEED TO TALK WITH THE PLO

ARTHUR I. WASKOW

Public awareness of recent unofficial meetings between members of the Palestine Liberation Organization and a number of Israelis and American Jews has again raised the issue: are such meetings in time of war or near war a kind of treason, or a useful way to open the avenue toward negotiations? The question is not new. During the tensest moments of the cold war, Russian and American scientists kept alive the "Pugwash" meetings. At the time many Americans thought Cyrus Eaton, the businessman who sponsored the metings, a traitor to democracy. Yet many of the ideas and approaches that led us away from the brink of thermonuclear war toward a chilly but workable détente came out of Pugwash.

Even a hot war has had its Pugwash. During the worst days of Vietnam, Tom Hayden and others in the American anti-war movement organized a series of meetings between Americans and leaders of North Vietnam—meetings in Paris and in Hanoi itself. Hayden was excoriated as a traitor, but when the United States Government decided to negotiate with North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front in the South, Averell Harriman consulted Hayden to get a sense of who was who and what was what—what the possibilities were. Later unofficial meetings led by Cora Weiss provided the first substantial information on POWs. And now it seems obvious that all those unofficial American-Vietnamese discussions were crucial to opening up the process that ended the war.

The same process has now begun among Israelis, American Jews and Palestinians. In the past year, under the aegis of the Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, a number of leading Israelis—one retired major general, two members of the Knesset, one former editor of the Labor Party's newspaper, one leading financial executive, one leading publisher—have met in Europe with leaders of the PLO. Both sides tried to imagine what a peace settlement might look like. They were candid and specific about the difficulties. The Israelis recognized that they did not speak for their government—though they periodically reported to Prime Minister Rabin—and they recognized that the Palestinians might not be able to speak for the PLO. Recently both sides signed a statement urging a peace settlement based on the acceptance by Israel and a new Palestinian state of each other's existence. The PLO responded by disclaiming official responsibility for these meetings or for the statement, but did not denounce the content of the statement or order it withdrawn.

A resolution introduced in the Knesset to denounce the meetings was defeated. The vote was narrow, but most members upheld the right of Israelis to meet the Arabs; some declared it desirable.

Meanwhile, during November, two officials of the PLO visited the United States. They met with gentiles, businessmen, politicians. They also met with Jews in three American cities—for the most part, staff people and

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members of a number of major Jewish organizations. One leader of American Zionism said that he met with them because the ambassador of a foreign country friendly to Israel had urged him to do so.

The conversations were frank. The PLO people said they wanted to make peace with their enemies, and they made sure that the "enemies" part was heard, as well as "make peace." They said that talking with American Jews was important to them because American Jews have influence in Israel—both directly and through the American Government. They said that they wanted Israel to "go first" in recognizing that the Palestinians have a right to a state, because the Israelis already have a state, the recognition of which is the Palestinians' only trump card. They said that peace could be made on the basis of coexistence between a Palestinian state and a Jewish state. (See Mark A. Bruzonsky, "Carter and the Middle East," *The Nation*, December 11, 1976.)

The Jews said, again and again, that this agreement to build Palestine alongside Israel had to be officially set forth by the PLO, that unofficial statements would not do. They said that Israeli doves must be able to tell their people that they have won something from the Palestinians, so that Israelis become willing to take the next step. They said that they could not press the U.S. Government to invite the PLO to Geneva until the Palestinians had clearly accepted coexistence with Israel. They urged the Palestinians to create a public "Peace Front," to put their political futures on the line as Israelis and American Jews were doing. The meetings were tense. They were also informative. They laid out how far and how close the two sides were to an agreement.

The meetings became public because the Israeli Embassy leaked a report on them to the *Jerusalem Post*. For about three weeks the comments of Israeli officials, the American Jewish press, and the leaders of American Jewish organizations were cautious and calm. Then Israel unexpectedly plunged into an election campaign and, whether for that reason or because the American Jewish leadership reassessed the whole Arab "peace offensive" and decided to oppose it, the atmosphere changed. The official leaders of the American Jewish community, meeting in the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, decided to do what the Knesset had not done: they denounced all meetings with the PLO. The denunciation is now being given teeth: enormous suasion is being exerted against further meetings, against the American Friends Service Committee (which sponsored one of the three conversations) and against Breira (the one American Jewish organization that has supported the meetings).

Breira (the word means "choice," "alternative") was organized out of prescient worries before the 1973 war; it has grown continuously, as American Jewish concern for Israel's safety has grown. It began as a collection of people from the flanks of Jewish organizations, all of which were ignoring the need for a new approach to make Israel secure in the Middle East. These people came together bearing the fragments of old ideologies—Socialist Zionism, religious Diasporanism, Jewish-committed liberalism—that may no longer work as whole commitments, but are still guides to decent action.

On February 20-21 in Washington, Breira will sponsor its first national membership convention and will decide on its policy, not only for the Middle East, but, beyond it, for such issues as relations between Diaspora Jewry and Israel, the nature of Jewish life in America, and the quality of Israeli society. This convention itself has become a major focus of the pressure from the conventional Jewish organizations. While Breira was planning its meeting, the AFSC set up its own conference, also in Washington, for the weekend of February 12, to discuss the context for an Israeli-Palestinian peace. Though the two meetings are utterly distinct, the established Jewish leadership is using the existence of each conference to beat the other over the head—apparently out of some jealous fear that Congress may read in the local papers reports of fresh and creative ideas for making a Middle East peace. The campaign has tried to break up an "alliance" that does not even exist—perhaps to make sure that it never comes to exist—and thus has raised most important questions about the possibility of a relationship between a peace-oriented Jewish grouping and a general American peace organization.

To the extent that the campaign may be aimed not at the future sin of affecting Congress but at the past sin of unofficial meetings with the PLO, it would make sense only on one ground: an absolute determination—more inflexible than that of the Israeli Government—that official delegates of Israel and the PLO shall never sit down together to make peace, that the PLO shall never be part of any peace settlement in the Middle East. But if the PLO is excluded, there never *will* be peace in the Middle East.

For the Arab governments cannot settle the war without solving the Palestinian problem, and the Palestinians have made it plain that their national decision-making body is the PLO. Even the mayors of West Bank towns who were chosen in elections held under Israeli supervision have insisted that, for national-political purposes, the PLO represents the Palestinian people. And the PLO has shown that, even at its weakest, even under the knife at the last stages of the Lebanese civil war, it had enough

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reserves of political strength to call Saudi Arabia to its aid. At the last ditch, the Saudis said "thus far and no farther" to the Syrians, who seemed ready to massacre the PLO.

Now, only months later, the whole Arab world has made clear that it will make peace only on the basis of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza—no more, but no less. The PLO has been tamed, but not destroyed. It is being pushed closer and closer to the moment when it will officially announce its acceptance of a West Bank-Gaza Palestinian state that can live peacefully alongside Israel.

In this situation, the American Jewish leadership should be trying to encourage the doves in the PLO who want to move in this direction—who are struggling against their own hawks. It should be encouraging contacts between American Jews and Palestinians—in which the Palestinians could be told as often as necessary what reasonable terms for peace must be, just as they were told in the meetings this past November. To forbid and punish such meetings, to try to prevent the contacts that must be made if there is ever to be peace, is to condemn Israel to disaster and thousands of Israelis to death. It is to say, "Israelis should fight and die to the last Israeli in order to make American Jews feel tough."

It is to say that it is treason to care about peace for Israel. It is to say that the horrendous Israeli inflation, the ever broader gap between Israelis of European and Afro-Asian origin, the demoralization that has led to a growth of emigration and a sharp decline in immigration as well as to a rash of corruption and scandal, the sharpening conflict between Jewish Israelis and Arab Israelis, the increasing isolation of Israel in the world—that none of these things matter. It is to say that the living state of Israel does not matter—that only an abstract idea of Israel matters.

Of course, those who struggle for peace in the midst of war are always called traitors. However deeply they care about the welfare of their own people, they are called traitors. But the American Jewish leadership should know better. Americans—not least among them American Jews—have just been through a period when those who struggled for peace were so pilloried.

We know now that those who criticized the policy of the U.S. Government in Vietnam were right. They were right not only because of what the U.S. Government was doing to the people of Vietnam but because of what it was doing to the people of America. The Israeli Government is not behaving toward the Palestinian people with anything like the ferocity that the U.S. Government used on Vietnam—but the *internal* damage the Israeli Government is doing to Israel itself is even worse than the damage the U.S. Government did to America. Why is it so hard for the American Jewish leadership to learn this lesson from its own experience in regard to America and Vietnam?

One reason is that Israel has much less margin for error than America had. American critics of U.S. policy in Vietnam could rest secure in the belief that not even the worst imaginable American defeat in Vietnam could destroy America. The Conference of Presidents fears that an Israeli mistake could lead to the destruction of Israel. But that is not enough to explain the Presidents' reaction—the critics agree that an Israeli mistake could lead to disaster. The debate is over what would constitute an Israeli mistake. The critics think the policy of the present government is leading to disaster; the Conference of Presidents thinks it a disastrous mistake to criticize that policy.

The only explanation for the Presidents' position is an old one, a sad one: people want to believe that their leaders, especially their governments, know what they are doing. They want to believe this because it is too frightening to think otherwise. If the governments do not know what is really going on in the world, who does?

This attitude is old enough that the Bible has to warn us, "Put not your trust in princes." This warning, and the command "Seek peace and pursue it," are the bedrock on which rest the efforts of those Jews who have met with Palestinians, and of those many others who were not themselves at the meetings but have been working for years to make possible a peace of mutual recognition.

For the religious among them, this connection to God's command is explicit and direct. For both the religious and the secularists, the Biblical words carry a sense of the age-old decency of the Jewish people. It is the desire to give this deep inward decency yet another generation of outward expression, yet another generation of building decency in the world, that animates them.

Their path is not easy, for the existence of these words in the Bible and the idea of a decent Jewish peoplehood do not by themselves create the surrounding support and sense of community that the words and the idea promise. Most of the Jewish peace seekers have loyalties, friends, pleasures—often jobs—that are deeply interknit with the organized Jewish community. Even when they agree intellectually with non-Jews who are seeking the same changes of policy, their emotional identification with the Jewish people is so strong that they shy away from remaking their loyalties, friendships, pleasures, jobs—that is, their lives—among those with whom they agree.

These commitments and desires virtually require the Jewish peace seekers to take on the arduous task of building new Jewish communities and connections. For some of them, survival would have been difficult without the *chavurot*—the new, nonhierarchical fellowships of prayer, celebration and study. For others, especially for some rabbis, the sustaining fact has been an open and empathic group of rabbinical friends who can feel the seriousness of an inner spiritual struggle that has political implications, even when they disagree with the results.

For still others, the task is to build an explicitly political network and community. That task is underway in Breira, since its national convention will provide the first opportunity to knit the organization together into a community of support and action. Again, the task will not be easy to do, but if it is done, the result may add a new dimension to the meetings with Palestinians of the past few years. The result could be peace at last, and the opening of a new direction for American Jewish life. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Dante on Water Street

DIVINE COMEDIES: Poems. *By James Merrill. Atheneum Publishers. 136 pp. $8.95.*

CLARA CLAIBORNE PARK

My office-mate, fresh from the university; his developing dissertation, which has to do with Pound; the things he says, which I don't understand. Semiotics? Phenomenology? Husserl? To ferry us to shallower waters I pose as idle a question as comes to mind. Do people read Pound for pleasure these days? I expect one of two answers. He'll say they certainly do, and his enthusiasm will strengthen me for one more try. Or he'll say they don't. But he says neither. Instead: "That," reflectively, "is a very interesting question."

I can find no reply. *Interesting*? In a first-class Ph.D. program, with a first-class fellowship and a first-class mind, he has spent two years of life on Pound. He'll spend another before he's done. Surely he cannot find the question of whether people get pleasure from reading the poems he thinks worth writing about unfamiliar enough to be interesting?

Fed
Up so long and variously by
Our age's fancy narrative concoctions,
I yearned for the kind of unseasoned telling found
In legends, fairy tales, a tone licked clean
Over the centuries by mild old tongues,
Grandam to cub, serene, anonymous.
Lacking that voice, the in its fashion brilliant
Nouveau roman (even the one I wrote)
Struck me as an orphaned form, whose followers,
Suckled by Woolf not Mann, had stories told them
In childhood, if at all, by adults whom
They could not love or honor.

So James Merrill, trying out the voices for the tale he had to tell in "The Book of Ephraim," the *pièce de résistance* of his seventh book of poems, *Divine Comedies*. He abandoned his original idea of a novel and settled on a telling not in prose but in verse. It is a verse not orphaned but fully parented in the flesh and the spirit, suckled, if not by Woolf, by a crowd of others. Yeats and Stevens, Kafka, Proust, Auden, Izak Dinesen, Brünnhilde, Tadzio, Miss Malin Nat-og-Dag—past presences, real and fictional, pervade his poetry. Highly seasoned and anything but anonymous, it is in some important sense serene, with the serenity of those who can still experience history, personal and public, as properly occasioning love and honor.

We may wonder how his rainbow narrative of the holiness of the heart's affections amid passing time will fare among a generation most of whom have had poems read them in childhood not at all. *Divine Comedies* has been out a year, and the reviews give hope the pleasure principle's not yet dead. For their keynote is enjoyment. Helen Vendler hopes the story's not yet finished. Harold Bloom says he's read "The Book of Ephraim" a dozen times. A *dozen*? I believe him; I'm catching up. It's a heady feeling after all these years, a kind of incredulous satisfaction. One-hundred and thirty-six pages of poetry, ninety of them in "Ephraim" alone, not latter-day pages compounded of white space and print 20 to 1, but most-for-your-money pages solid with iambic pentameter, and I'm reading them *fast* because I want to see what comes next, and then again slow because I want to figure out how it fits in, I'm reading them for fun, and then poring over them for profit and delight.

Fun, of course, is to be expected from comedies, but who today expects to realize expectations? Dante (the celestial mechanics of whose tour of the spheres Merrill will casually explain) certainly did not promise fun. Nevertheless the parallel Merrill's title asserts has more than the customary ironic validity. Dante is the most personal of poets, relying on those he had loved and honored to guide him through the universe, memorializing in rich human particularity the history, poetry, philosophy, the politics, the geography of his public and private world. Merrill's *Comedies* are similarly rooted. Like Dante, like Yeats too, Merrill makes his poetry out of events and people whose primary significance is that they have happened to him or that he has cared about them. It is a significance which, if the poet is good enough, is sufficient for us all. The furnace that broke down in Athens in the cold rain of winter 1964, the one that broke down in Stonington ten years later at the year's end, the irresistible meal consumed at a Venetian *trattoria* ("Melon with ham, risotto with shellfish,/ Cervello fritto spitting fire at us,/ Black cherries' pit-deep sweetness . . . Strega and espresso,")—food, music, pictures, plants, animals, lovers, family, friends, the rooms and landscapes they inhabit, are named and suffused with meaning. Taking place over nearly twenty years (1955-74, Eisenhower to Watergate) the poem compasses the poet's own maturing and binds the generations. The huge cast of characters includes babies and adolescents as well as the youngish, the aging, the old, the dying, and the dead. Like Dante he secures his events in time. Dates are placed where we can find them, for it's by the calendar that we must grasp time's passage. For reasons we'll discover, each of the twenty-six sections of the "Book of Ephraim" begins with a letter of the alphabet; D, Dramatis Personae, provides essential orientation, dates of birth and (particularly) of death. For Dante and Yeats personal experience leads beyond itself to, literally, another world, and Merrill's testimony, like theirs, is that that world is inherently personal. And for Merrill too the praise and interest of the other world is tempered by his unregenerate attachment to the things of this one.

What kinds of pleasure did people use to get from poetry, in the olden days when poets could make a living by writing it? We've forgotten. Even in school we don't read Scott or Browning or even *The Odyssey* anymore. Our adolescents do their own traveling, or get their exotic backgrounds from film and the *National Geographic*. Merrill offers "Market, mackerel, minaret,/ Simmering mulligatawney of the real"—persons and places and events perceived through the affections and rendered in orders and textures of language which affirm their value for the poet, and so for us. In this as in other ways Merrill has chosen to honor tradition. Until literature's yesterday, poets mostly told stories. The memory of that has been

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dimmed for us. Just as well. The combination of "our age's fancy narrative concoctions" with the unabashed privatism of this tone-deaf century's lyric voice would be enough to break the patience even of the docile readers it has trained and fed. Fed, as Merrill says, Up. The reader's attention to verse narrative required faith, faith that prolonged attention would pay off, that a tale would emerge which was intelligible, exciting, and significant. Dante, like all the great narrative poets, lets us know clearly where he starts from, whom he proceeds with, what goes on—basic clarities which sustain us to attempt the incidental riddles and enjoy them. Merrill, though he's no more than Dante an easy poet, gives us all the clues we need to follow him through a poem of many riddles and many settings. Dante named every river in Italy. Merrill gives us Kandy, Kyoto, Kew, Geneva, Santa Fe, Venice, the papyrus swamps of the Nile, the South African veldt and, as exotic as any, Purgatory, Okla., where young Temerlin's educated chimp-child Miranda makes Merrill the sign for "happy" and charms him with a great open-jawed kiss. "Who can doubt/ She's one of us? . . ./ Weren't we still groping, like Miranda, toward/ Some higher level?" Merrill, like Yeats and unlike Dante, has had to make his own myth. No wonder his narrative holds the attention; it's about reincarnation and communion with the cherished dead.

Merrill is on his last life; a dear friend gone before has intervened for him (as Plato did for Wallace Stevens). His companion David Jackson will have two, at most three, more. Can this be *serious*? The humor is disarming enough. Merrill's father dies and gets through to his son, plainly undimmed:

Are we in India? Some goddamn fool
Hindoo is sending him to Sunday School.
He loved his wives, his other children, me,
Looks forward to his next life. Would not be
Weeping in my shoes. An offhand salute
And gone!

Born again, we learn, to a greengrocer in Kew. Some are reborn, some, like Auden, BYRON PAVLOVA BILLY SUNDAY JOB/OTTO & GENGHIZ KHAN MME CURIE, are moving upward and need not return. "Wallace Stevens . . . reads us jottings from his slate of cloud." Mozart, however, preferring live music to the humdrum spheres, is now a black rock star. Like Yeats and Dante, Merrill tells what we most long to hear, and from someone so much smarter and more sophisticated we might just manage the required suspension of disbelief—to hope that personality survives death.

So JM and DJ and assorted friends, assembled in the flame-red dining room at Stonington, submit to the guidance of—or do they guide?—a ten-cent-store teacup among the letters and numerals, simple materials of

The Book of a Thousand and One Evenings Spent
With David Jackson at the Ouija Board
In Touch with Ephraim Our Familiar Spirit.

Ephraim? Greek Jew, A.D. 8-36, a favorite of TIBERIUS and lover of CALIGULA—the caps of the ouija messages. Ephraim is gay in every sense, not least Yeats's dead serious one, of gaiety transfiguring dread. Continuously witty, he fills them in on Heaven and the NINE STAGES of an afterlife which allows for growth but not punishment. Dante, Merrill tells us, had to invent his Hell and Purgatory to fit the prevailing dogma, working "from footage / Too dim and private to expose";

His Heaven, though, as one cannot but sense,
Tercet by tercet, is pure Show and Tell.

Ephraim is at STAGE 6 (with GBS):

Here on Earth—huge tracts of information
Have gone into these capsules flavorless
And rhymed for easy swallowing—on Earth
We're each the REPRESENTATIVE of a PATRON. . . .
These secular guardian angels fume and fuss
For what must seem eternity over us.
It is forbidden them to INTERVENE
Save, as it were, in the entr'acte between
One incarnation and another.

DJ's and JM's patrons (JM is an editor of Pope, whence all these couplets) are fusty souls who disapprove of their representatives' life style; we hear much more about E and his cherished representative, who thanks to the poet's unauthorized intervention comes to life behind the silk bangs and serene blue eyes of Wendell Pincus, born to JM's niece Betsy. Uncle James will meet him in Venice in a Dantean encounter eighteen years later. JM and DJ think an unexpected lot about babies; JM's exshrink, consulted in panic after their meddling brings transcendental sanction and (temporary) silence, is ready with the 20th-century explanation: "what you and David do / We call folie à deux." JM gets the picture:

Somewhere a Father-Figure shakes his rod
At sons who have not sired a child?
Through our own spirit we can both proclaim
And shuffle off the blame
For how we live. . . .

Plausible. Yet "FREUD/ We learned that evening DESPAIRS/ OF HIS DISCIPLES," and "the question/ Of who or what we took Ephraim to be/ And of what truths (if any) we considered/ Him spokesman" is explicitly begged. Too clever not to hedge this bet, Merrill concedes he may be "a projection/ Of what already burned, at some obscure/ Level or other, in our skulls." Yet experience is stranger than fiction; the experience of Ephraim is "a strangeness that was us," but also "was not." The point's not to check out his stories (which they conspicuously do not do), but

Never to forego, in favor of
Plain dull proof, the marvelous nightly pudding.

Frivolous? Ephraim reports Pope loves the poem, but JM fears Stevens will think it "mere bric-a-brac," as Auden, who read parts while still alive, thought it "folderol," secure in "*his* dogma, rooted like a social tooth." When Ephraim, in the face of one death emits a truly ghastly pun he shocks even his interlocutors into asking "Must everything be witty?" His answer, in a weighted Alexandrine, ends a section:

AH MY DEARS
I AM NOT LAUGHING I WILL SIMPLY NOT SHED TEARS

There is much more than puns and games in this poem about "the test of time that all things pass." Crippled and blinded by stroke, Maya, patroness of their love and the most vividly established personage in the poem, dies as they watch.

The blind, sunset-invaded
Eyeball. Lucent spittle overbrimming
Lips wiped of all pretense. And in the ward's
Gloom the gleam of tongs, clean stench of gauzes.
What light there was fell sideways from a mind
Half dark. We stood and tried to bear
The stroke for *Maya. . . .*

They couldn't. Destroyed and gone, like so many other friends; "never held in high enough esteem." How sorely welcome, then, her message:

DAVID JIMMY I AM YOUNG AT LAST
WHO ALL THESE YEARS TRIED TO APPEAR SO
MY HAIR IS TRULY RED

Wholly enwebbed in their context, Merrill's lines frustrate quotation. We need all he has already told us about Maya to feel the joyous urgency of these trochees, the opening, of all things, of

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a sonnet, as we need the full section (it is R) to see that its sharp rhythms and strict, astringent assonances avert all threat of sentimentality.

Merrill's *Comedies* are well named. Where death is not accepted as final it is hard to sustain a sense of tragedy. But euphoria, too, passes. By the end of the poem Ephraim no longer comes, or the aging companions no longer summon him. *Tempora mutantur*; so do we. For all the frivolity, Merrill announced his theme at once in A: "the incarnation and withdrawal of a god."

We've modulated. Keys ever remoter
Lock our friend among the golden things that go
Without saying, the loves no longer called up
Or named.

Keys of music, keys that secure treasure—the play of language is for pleasure. But these persistent puns are more —they are the poet's testimony to an ancient faith, the faith in the profound significances handed us by the adventitious and the random. It is not merely incidental that Merrill reveals himself as a virtuoso of trope and form, blank verse his common speech, developing sonnets as casually as the rest of us stammer, sliding imperceptibly into couplets, "loose talk tightening into verse." He can toss off a whole narrative section in sonnets; he casts his meeting with WENDELL P in supple terza rima, even ending, as Dante ended his canticles, with the word "stars." "The twinklings of insight," Merrill tells us, require a "metrical lens" to focus them, and "kismet" is "veiled as a stern rhyme sound." That the exigencies of rhyme and meter bestow insights that the wildest freedoms withhold is known to anyone who ever managed a double dactyl. But Merrill's faith is even more profoundly traditional: the faith that appearances and chance connections are upheld by correspondences no earthly poet has created. If our varied "languages"—his quotation marks —"bird-flight,/ Hallucinogen, chorale, and horoscope" are all "facets of the universal gem," randomness is only apparent. Dante, whose terza rima mirrored the Trinity, would have found the idea wholly familiar; Renaissance cabalists would have seen nothing singular in making the letters of the alphabet an organizing principle. Merrill's virtuosity, while offering us all the traditional pleasures, remains a means, not an end. The end —even more profoundly traditional—is to mirror experienced truth.

But what is to be made of the experience, now Ephraim no longer comes, and the companions have "grown autumnal, mild"? Always previously invoked among the heavens, Ephraim at last sinks "back underground," one more god whose grave guarantees returning spring. Yet over Strega and espresso Uncle James can still speak of the self's "great, great glory" to counter young Wendell's rejection of "doomed, sick, selfish, dumb mankind," and "DJ's old-fashioned/ Trust in nature, human and divine" is underwritten no less in the end than in the beginning. In the cold house in Stonington at the story's end (yet "Has it ended?" Merrill asks,) JM and DJ, still together, consider burning the carton of dusty messages. But they don't do it. "Too much/ Already, here below, has met its match." Ambiguous enough. But the only kind of hero the poet can be is a hero of our time. Merrill presents his affirmations in the acceptable modern mode, through a shimmer of qualifications and concessions, shadowed forth in other voices, other tongues. But the poem's epigraph, from the "Paradiso," is *"Tu credi 'l vero"*—You believe truly.

In Q, a prose section of personally significant Quotations, Merrill for once transmits Ephraim's message raw and unversified: & NOW ABOUT DEVOTION IT IS I AM FORCED TO BELIEVE THE MAIN IMPETUS Indeed; as Dante learned, it moves the sun and the other stars. Or in Merrill's own exquisite image, what ties us to the dust is "the tough tendril/ Of unquestioning love alone." We owe him our gratitude for risking his credentials as a modernist to show us that poetry still offers its old-fashioned pleasures. These poems, in language we can remember and possess, are testimony to an achieved web of values both transcendent and human. □

In the Wasteland They Created

A HISTORY OF MODERN POETRY: From the 1890s to the High Modernist Mode. *By David Perkins. Harvard University Press. 602 pp. $17.50.*

ORMOND SEAVEY

The modernist poets as a group were contemptuous of history, that tedious teacher of lessons. "History, history! We fools, what do we know or care?" exclaimed William Carlos Williams in his own revisionist history of America. "History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors/And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,/Guides us by vanities," warned Eliot. For him history was a heap of fragments, to be reordered by the artist without regard for the original sequence. Yeats and others found that history could be combined with myth:

Locke sank into a swoon;
The Garden died;
God took the spinning-jenny
Out of his side.

They called themselves modernists as if no one would ever be more modern than they, more fully in control of the present and the future.

The modernist writers sought in part to replace the 19th-century sense of history as an accumulation of occurrences, distinct in themselves, which develop evenly and inevitably from the past toward the future. Because they wrote as if they were at the end of time, they could dismiss that conception of history. The modernist writers had perhaps little effect on the writing of history, but the consciousness which they engendered made it difficult to treat literature as if it had a history. Eliot's famous dictum that the greatest works constitute an ideal and ever changing order, implied that it hardly mattered who wrote what and when.

In the late 19th century it was not so. George Saintsbury and Sir Leslie Stephen could write literary history with a confidence long since mislaid. Saintsbury's *History of Nineteenth Century Literature* catalogues the movements and makers of his century not as a modest service to criticism but as a superior form of ordering. The very act of setting writers in their historical sequences served almost to render a judgment: these were first, these others came after, those in the next chapter were there too. Saintsbury appeared not so much to judge as to set down what any thinking person would conclude on the basis of good taste and wide reading. As an historian, he was concerned with writers as well as with works. He reports the story that Wordsworth used to cut the pages of books with a buttery knife. "After that," he observes, "it is probably unnecessary to say more."

In light of what has happened to literary history, the title itself of David Perkins's book is surprising. *A History*

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of Modern Poetry seeks to do just what its title suggests. Perkins does not attempt some striking synthesis about what modern poetry is doing. He does not identify the modern tradition and in passing eliminate those writers who happen not to be working out of that tradition. His book is a chronicle of writers and their books, of traditions rather than the tradition.

Perkins, a professor of English at Harvard, has written on the Romantic poets, and he is the editor of a well-known anthology of Romantic writers. The anthology today is a leading genre of academic criticism. Huge collectively edited anthologies published by Norton and Oxford serve the same selecting and ordering function carried out by the 19th-century men of letters. It is perhaps possible in America to earn a degree in English literature without reading anything outside of an anthology. As a result, works appear to be not so much the product of individual writers as the manifestation of traditions described in headnotes, and the process of selection into the anthology is itself equivalent to the establishment of classic rank. Anthologies have gotten bigger and bigger. In their disregard for stern discriminations of material, they are symptomatic of how far we have left behind us the modernists, with their radical urge to dislocate and condense the tradition. Wide reading has to some degree replaced close reading as the aim of literary study.

Early in the book Perkins mentions the role of anthologies in America during the late 19th century. Because Americans were not accustomed to reading their poetry in books by individual authors, they came to think of poetry as a quaint and timeless realm peopled by Shakespeare, Chaucer, Milton, Wordsworth and Keats. The Americans who tried to write poetry at the end of the 19th century had their bodies in Boston or Louisville or California and their minds in the anthologies. The English poets at the turn of the century wrote scarcely better. As Perkins points out, the English Romantic poets had by then assumed the status of classics and were granted the same intimidating power that Virgil or Horace had for an earlier age. With great effort the modernist poets and their forerunners trained themselves not to equate beauty and truth, not to look for thoughts too deep for tears.

A significant part of modern literary scholarship is the game of re-evaluation. The critic finds a writer or work which has been neglected or misunderstood and tries to push his discovery into the center of a newly reordered tradition. Some memorable successes have emerged from this practice: the discovery of Melville in the 1920s, the recent re-evaluation of Kipling, the postwar revival of Faulkner. Many poets are dealt with in *A History of Modern Poetry*, well over a hundred distinctly treated, and yet Perkins produces no surprises. He seems almost to refuse to be surprising. The poets whom critical consensus has found minor remain minor; Pound, Eliot, Yeats, Frost, and a handful of others remain major. Still, the effort of reading so many poets could hardly exist without a corresponding appetite for them, and Perkins finds favorable things to say about some generally overlooked writers. Walter de la Mare is one whom he offers as a kind of master. De la Mare, he says, wrote the finest children's poetry of the 20th century, and his lyrics, while without great ambition, have an open-eyed intelligence to them. The temptation to dismiss wittily would be nearly irresistible to most critics who are making their way through the Benéts, Louis Untermeyer, Adelaide Crapsey, and others, but Perkins seems endlessly patient. Still, an anecdote will sometimes quietly reveal the rapport between a poet and his time. We discover that in 1943 a Liberty Ship was named the *Sara Teasdale*.

There are no footnotes and no bibliography in *A History of Modern Poetry*. Perkins offers himself not so much as either scholar or critic but as a *reader*, one who has read the work of all these poets with intelligence, care, and a capacity for wide appreciation. (In view of the general care and scrupulousness of the book, however, it is disappointing to see so many misprints.) The labor of reading and appreciating so widely requires, as Perkins confesses, "a partial suppression of one's own critical personality." Part of that suppression of personality—which Perkins's style suggests is not so much adopted as ingrained—dictates that the treatments of the greatest poets do not look very fresh to anyone who is mildly acquainted with the criticism of modern poetry. Thus in talking about *The Waste Land*, he avoids offering a new interpretation, since it is the interpretations already in circulation which are important to him as an historian of modernism.

Perkins is somewhat self-conscious about the categorizations he must make. Conrad Aiken goes in the chapter on "Conservative and Regional Poets of America"—"because to place him anywhere else would be even less appropriate." Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams all appear in "The New York Avant-Garde." Yeats appears everywhere, and then again in a final chapter specially devoted to him.

This volume is the first of two, beginning approximately with the turn of the century and carrying through to the early 1920s, with the establishment of what Perkins calls "the high modernist mode." Toward the end of the present book he becomes more and more preoccupied with explaining what has been dealt with in this volume and what must be postponed until the next. Certainly the next volume, which is scheduled to cover poetry up to the present, will be the more demanding in terms of both organization and criticism. The present is never easy to assimilate into the past, unless it is a very unpromising present. When F.O. Matthiessen compiled his edition of the *Oxford Book of American Verse* in 1950, he included poets up to the young Robert Lowell. Richard Ellmann, in his *New Oxford Book of American Verse* published in 1976, has no poet younger than Imamu Amiri Baraka. It will be necessary to rely on more than critical consensus to

SOUTH PARADISE HOTEL

It rains every day and we're the only guests.
I listen to your footsteps ring
climbing the terrazza stair.

You burst in, the geranium explodes.

You carried it all the way from the frontyard
cradled under your coat.

This morning in the butcher's shop
I watched with the same
cold eyes
blood spatter the floor.

Jean Feraca

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describe the important poetry being written right now, since no such consensus exists.

There is an interesting ambiguity in the use of the word "high" in the "high modernist mode" of Perkins's subtitle. The term refers first to a peak of accomplishment within an artistic movement, like the High Renaissance or the High Middle Ages. That moment was surely reached in the early 1920s, with *The Waste Land*, Pound's first *Cantos*, Stevens's *Harmonium*, Yeats's great visionary poems, and others. "High" also suggests a standard of liturgical correctness. Eliot, himself a High Churchman, helped to invent high modernist criticism, a mode not yet replaced. Modernism was thus both an accomplishment and a new and particularly demanding orthodoxy.

In time the word "modernist," and perhaps even the word "modern," must inevitably take on different associations. The newness has passed; the radical message now requires teachers of literature to evoke its radicalness. "Modernist" will become a word like "Baroque" or "Metaphysical" or "Romantic," a word referring to an important literary tradition of the past. Already it is necessary to distinguish between "Modernist" and "Contemporary" in the poetry of the 20th century, a distinction in some ways comparable to that between Romantic and Victorian. If the Romantic poets had become the classics on which the modernists were raised, Eliot, Pound, and Yeats are by now classics who rival or surpass the Romantics.

In ways partly unintentional *A History of Modern Poetry* undercuts the high modernist mode. Instead of appearing in their ideal and continually reordered traditions, the modernists appear amidst a swarm of other poets of their times. Eliot stands not with Donne, Dryden, Virgil and Horace but rather with Sandburg, Wilfred Owen, Vachel Lindsay, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and many others. The sense of revolution in modernism is diluted; what we see is a busy scene where many write, a few of them well.

Perkins is never obtuse in his comments, and he is often unobtrusively wise. About Stephen Crane's poems he says, "they arrest attention, but do not hold it." He is alert to the predictable habits of literary critics. Conrad Aiken, he remarks, "attracts the sort of reader who is eager to make a 'discovery.' Having invested hope and effort, such readers are tempted to proclaim that the neglect is unjust." In summarizing the career of William Watson as an example of the feeble close of the Victorian era, he says, "His strongest emotion was his desire to be a great poet."

One must at last have mixed feelings about this book. Perkins's responses to the minor poets can be trusted, and the book is a good introduction to modern poetry. Yet his history seems to me a symptom of how placid and stable our awareness of the modernists has become. They please us more than they arouse us. The excitement generated around and shortly after World War I does not manifest itself in Perkins's book. Perhaps that excitement is now an emotion gone out of phase.

In his stance as the detached appreciator, Perkins cannot easily deal with the requirements of his own time, our time. The greatness of the modernists is in part that they closed off so many options to subsequent poets. If they were hard on history, they were much more severe with the future. A large part of the significance of the modernist poets, nowhere suggested in this serviceable book, is that we live in the wasteland they created. □

Caribbean Images

SEA GRAPES. *By Derek Walcott. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 84 pp. $8.95.*

RICHARD PEVEAR

The setting that is most often on Derek Walcott's mind even when he is writing about some place else is introduced in the title poem of his new collection, *Sea Grapes*. What that poem also makes clear is the way this setting becomes poetic material. If Walcott is a poet of place, the place is not merely geographical:

That sail which leans on light,
tired of islands,
a schooner beating up the Caribbean

for home, could be Odysseus
home-bound on the Aegean. . . .

The poet lives in Trinidad, but metaphorically he lives in a sea and island world that gathers into itself the anonymity, pre-cartographic, of all seas and islands, the home of a people whose specific, historical circumstances often concern him but of whom he can also say

My race began as the sea began,
with no nouns, and with no horizon,
with pebbles under my tongue,
with a different fix on the stars. . . .

It is a world in which what is limited and personal in even the most intimate emotion seems to be washed away:

I live on the water,
alone. Without wife and children.
I have circled every possibility
to come to this:

a low house by grey water. . . .

But because it is anonymous this world is open to many namings, to simultaneous namings, without losing its physical presence. Allusion is constantly interwoven with description in these poems. Watching the home-bound schooner, the poet feels in himself "that father and husband's/longing . . ." which is "like the adulterer hearing Nausicaa's name/ in every gull's outcry." And he goes on to the end of the poem weaving together the intimate and the allusive, the present and the past:

The ancient war
between obsession and responsibility
will never finish and has been the same

for the sea-wanderer or the one on shore
now wriggling on his sandals to walk home,
since Troy sighed its last flame,

and the blind giant's boulder heaved the trough
from whose ground-swell the great hexameters come
to the conclusions of exhausted surf.

The classics can console. But not enough.

It is only the sudden shift in the last line that finally dissolves the allusion in the present and the personal.

The formal qualities of the poem are as characteristic of Walcott's work as the way it articulates its setting: the movement from irregular rhythms to a subtly varied pentameter line; the use of unapparent rhymes and half-rhymes; the mixing of conversational simplicity and rhetorical fullness. There is the same accomplishment in a fine poem that appears a few pages later in the book, "Frederiksted, Dusk," in which "old men like empties/ set down from morning outside the almshouse," wait for sunset:

Whatever it is
that leaves bright flesh like sand and turns it chill,
not age alone, they were old, but a state

Richard Pevear, a poet and critic, has translated Alain's The Gods *(New Directions).*

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made possible by their collective will,
would shine in them like something
between life
and death, our two concrete simplicities,
and waited too in, seeming not to wait,
substantial light and insubstantial stone.

The last line is one of those surprisingly true reversals that a poet sometimes lucks into, like MacDiarmid's "The sea remains, the land ebbs and flows."

Walcott's "Dread Song" also reminds me of MacDiarmid, but this time the MacDiarmid of social passion, who wrote of "the tragedy of an unevolved people" in his poem "The Glen of Silence." Walcott is writing about the "Papas, Uncles, Docs" of the islands who sell out their own people, who

embrace us within
bracket and parenthesis

their snake arms of brotherhood
(the brackets of the bribe).

There is power, and a significant change from the language of the earlier poems, in the last lines:

Behind the dark glasses
the fire is dying

the coal of my people;
no vision, no flame,

no deepness, no danger,
more music, less anger

more sorrow, less shame
more talk of the River

that wash out my name
let things be the same

forever and ever
the faith of my tribe.

The simple, forceful rhythm of the poem seems to carry the poet away from the idiom of accomplished verse and into the speech of the island people. This is anonymity of a different kind, the anonymity of Skelton's great political tirade, *Colin Clout*. There are other strong political poems in *Sea Grapes* which attack the party men whose professional anger takes no notice of the people and whose acts betray them. "Listen," he says to them, "you/ could still come with me again,/ to watch the rain coming from far/ like rain, not like votes,/ . . . you, who served the people a dung cake of maggots":

feel it with me

again, you bastard papas,
how it seeps through the pores,
how it loads the sponge of the heart

with the grief of a people. . . .

Certainly, if poetry is to find a place again outside its own professional circle, one way it will have to follow is the path that Walcott has started on here. A second path, complementary to it, is the one that leads to the sources of living speech, as in the group of poems in this book that makes use of Creole French. The roots of poetry lie in dialects and in common human concerns, just as the final refinement of political power is the invention of an arbitrary language that generates a fictive world. The steps Walcott has taken to re-establish poetic connections here are of great importance.

But as yet they are only the first few steps. These political poems, with their radical simplification of technique, achieve something of Skelton's power, but not his transcendence of the personal voice. Colin Clout was not Skelton the poet, he was effectively the commons of England, hammering on the doors of the Star Chamber, demanding an end to Wolsey's abuses. That end came soon (though before it came, Skelton was forced to take sanctuary in Westminster). But this sort of living exchange is all but ruled out by the aesthetic assumptions of contemporary poetry, which are personal, or else Parnassian. And it is extremely difficult to go beyond those limits. Walcott's "The Bright Field," a poem about the end of the British Empire, is beautifully written, but weighted with an historical vision or statement which is obscured by the manner of its composition. It depicts a crowd of Londoners heading for the subway after work as a field being harvested, and develops the metaphor with that practiced skill that is typical of so much contemporary verse:

Their sun that would not set was going
down
on their flushed faces . . .
like walking sheaves of harvest, the
quick crowd
thickened in separate blades of cane or
wheat
from factories and office doors con-
veyed
to one end by the loud belt of the
street.

He watches the scene until

. . . the heart
seeing, like dark canes, the river-spires
sharpen,
feels an involuntary bell begin
to toll for everything, even in London,
heart of our history, original sin.

What makes me hesitate about the success of this poem is the disparity between the artful writing and what the poet is writing about. The skill seems to be not a poetic victory over the circumstances of a darkening time but something merely applied to the poem that does not suit its historical burden. It is, in the end, a piece of fine writing. And alongside it are poems dedicated to Frank O'Hara, Joyce, James Wright, Mandelstam, Neruda, Whitman, and poems about New York City and California, that belong to the omniverous word-culture of this country, not to the real world of Walcott's poetry. His book lacks wholeness and cumulative effect; it gives the impression, perhaps a false one in the long run, of a mixture of impulses and dispersal of talent, a pulling in opposite directions. I wonder if the inability to find a form strong enough or common enough to sustain a larger vision is inescapable in this strange time? Or is it that we keep choosing easier ways out, ways to go on producing poems though they make poetry into something less than it is? The second assumption is, in any case, the only one that can be acted on. Walcott is certainly aware of the problem and has struggled with it. That alone makes his work unusual. But with this book, he seems to be caught in the middle of it. □

DANCE

NANCY GOLDNER

During a single week in January, Merce Cunningham and Dance Company gave New Yorkers their first chance in five years to see a generous sampling of the Cunningham repertory proper—eight complete ballets, one a première and six new to New York, divided between two programs. Instead of performing whole dances as discrete entities, the company had been presenting Events, in which bits from several dances were performed without intermission. These Events irritated many people. Assuming that Cunningham was still choreographing as though he were making whole ballets, why present fragments? Why misrepresent, as it were, the structural assumptions that had gone into making those "fragments"? Seeing the regular repertory was a relief—if only to satisfy orderly minds—but not as profound a change as had been anticipated. One reason is simple: the order of the Events' events were usually organized to dramatize differences between allegro and adagio and between solo and ensemble dancing. So too with the two programs at the Minskoff Theatre. Other explanations are arguable. First, that by now Cunningham has done too good a job of tuning us up for Events. Second, that few of the new ballets evolved into signature tonalities strong enough to warrant discrete per-

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formance. Third, that Cunningham has indeed changed his choreographic methods to fit into the concept of interchangeable parts. Fourth, that no matter in what format his ballets are presented, one watches them as fragments.

The last possibility conforms to my own experience, although the exceptions to the rule may be too many to prove it. The most memorable and thrilling aspects of Cunningham dances are often absolutely self-contained. Here are some of the deepest pleasures of the Minskoff engagement: Ellen Cornfield and Meg Harper rise into attitude with the full force of ballet dancers, but their arms counteract that dynamic by rising gently and only to the breast. Chris Komar springs into a *pas de chat* but lands on one leg, thereby changing the jump's pounce into languor. With legs far apart, Karole Armitage pulls all her weight into the bending leg. You can sense the stretched leg succumbing to the pull as the instep's arch deepens, preparing to let go of the floor, but the ball and heel of her foot stay glued to the floor as by suction; one may chalk it up to a triumph of will. Even more exciting is to think of these moments as triumphs of the training that has produced articulate feet. A workaday warm-up step, *tendu battement*, becomes a choreographic motif, and suddenly one realizes how very interesting that step can be. And when the leg repeatedly brushes against the floor into a position neither exactly front or side, one realizes how very peculiar a *tendu* can be. The pleasures of Cunningham dances are limited only by the viewer's stamina. Step for step and rhythm for rhythm, no other choreographer vindicates so consistently and delightfully his own curiosity about moving bodies, and his proclivity to show us his discoveries with such transparency. But what this has to do with repertory I know not. I do know that several of the hodgepodge Events I have seen in recent years had more emotional reverberation and eventfulness than some of the "real" dances at the Minskoff.

There were two exceptions, *Solo* and *Sounddance* (*Signals* and *Summerspace* would have been exceptions also had *Signals* been given in its entirety and had *Summerspace* been performed with greater composure. After opening-night speeches, neither audience nor dancers seemed able to settle into its wide-open spaces; it kept falling off the stage.) *Solo* is one that Cunningham made for himself in 1973. It confirms that, although Cunningham's legs can no longer support the rigors of allegro delicacy and jumps, he's still the best damned dancer in the business. *Solo* is one of those animal-imitation numbers, the difference being that Cunningham imitates birds, antelopes and cats better than anyone else. He transcends anthropomorphism. When he rises to full height with his arms cocked over his head, we do not see a dancer relishing his stature any more than an antlered beast relishes his. We see only the bare facts of height and curve, and that is enough. Cunningham is also truthful to the anatomy of animals. Whereas leg power sends the dancer into flight, Cunningham-as-bird prepares to take off from the shoulders, sending them into a downsweep that is not as beautiful as it is powerful. Nor does the cat's skittery movements appear designed to tickle us. Cunningham makes them involuntary twitches of the nervous system, and a little unnerving. Moreover and more important, *Solo* pinpoints those animalistic qualities that serve dancers well. Animals seem to take in the environment by osmosis, through more senses than are known to mankind. So it seems of Cunningham when he walks in the stage space. An animal at rest exudes a profound silence. So does Cunningham. Animals move without stress, in an in-between world of dynamics. So does Cunningham; each movement is absolutely precise, yet neither limp nor emphatic. He, like his fellow animals, hits the exact midway point between repose and tension: he is alert.

Regular mortals, I think, find the extremes of dynamics easier to absorb in the theatre; Cunningham suspends us between them. Watching him from a disoriented state, it is then possible to zero in on his knee bones and knuckles, taking as much pleasure from them as from the lovely length and sway of his torso—and from the slightly bemused expression on his face. Yes, it is quite outrageous of him to make like an animal, but all of Cunningham's best dances and dancers transport one to an animal-like world. *Solo* is sheer virtuosity no matter what the circumstances of performance. It usually impregnates whatever else has or will happen in an Event, and it was the highlight of the recent *Dance in America* program on television, where ghostly silence beautifully underscored Cunningham's concentration. *Solo* does not need the formal presentation it was given at the Minskoff, but as a matter of principle I was glad it was so given. A great performance like this deserves a curtain and a curtain call.

Sounddance (1974) is one of Cunningham's assaults on the nervous system. As a test of the audience's endurance of frenetic dance rhythms and blasting drills (otherwise known as *Toneburst* by David Tudor), it is obviously enhanced by the undiluted form of the repertory system. It goes on very long and very relentlessly, which to some may seem a fault. But addicts of New York City pace were perhaps thankful that no other event came along to soften this one. In any case, the audience in which I sat gave *Sounddance* the most enthusiastic applause of the evening. Many of Cunningham's dance phrases are dense; patterns are in a constant state of flux. *Sounddance* intensifies density and flux to the state of nervous disorder. If understood as the allegro spirit gone haywire, *Sounddance* encourages a fascinating comparison with another defiantly allegro ballet, *Torse*. Why was *Sounddance* so theatrically brilliant and *Torse* quite beautiful but cool? A few possibilities come to mind. The rhythms of *Torse* are not nearly as erratic as those of *Sounddance*. *Torse* is mainly solo work done by an ensemble. *Sounddance* is complicated by a clustered use of dancers; furthermore, the clusters are in constant reformation. The dance is literally unsettled. tonally unsettling. Although the steps in *Torse* are quicker, they are all on the same scale. The difference between big and little in *Sounddance* is quite significant, and this too lends a fevered tone. Or is it simply that the musical accompaniment for *Torse* was practically subliminal, while the driving machines of Tudor's score were so sovereign as to determine the dance's story? With a different score, or with no score, *Sounddance* might be antic instead of frantic. It could very easily become the comic relief in an Event program, while *Torse*'s absolutely pure investigation of allegro movement renders it a perfect mainstay of the Event. In retrospect, *Torse* emerges as much a favorite as *Sounddance*, but insofar as titled dances anticipate theme or atmosphere, *Sounddance* was the only dance to live up to the fact of having a name.

Travelogue, the première, is a collaboration among Cunningham, John Cage and Robert Rauschenberg. Its spirit, however, is Dada collage. It would seem to make most sense in an Event, where it could "innocently" wander into another ballet and make real nonsense. The group enters on a spiffy bicycle-mobile designed by Rauschenberg. Someone takes a nap under its wheels. Later on he scurries about as though going somewhere, stopping briefly to shake hands with a fellow traveler. Of course, it's Cunningham; he's usually the most

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whimsical one in the whimsical ballets.

At some other point, Chris Komar walks on with shiny tin cans tied to his legs, but that is *not* so strange because earlier he had been holding a clothesline of tin cans and scarves. (Alas, Dadaism reduces us to such logic.) There are two marvelous solos, for Komar and Meg Harper, but clearly *Travelogue* is less about dancing than about the Dada-like blithe spirits wafting the Cunningham Dance Company on its vagabond tours of the United States.

John Cage has written at length about those tours—about the sandwiches consumed, the gas stations explored, and the whole humorous implausibility of group travel by very individual individuals. Cage has surrounded the company in happy myth and, for all one knows, has nurtured Cunningham's own capacity for whimsy in trying times. Whimsy is no doubt useful in a crowded Volkswagen bus. On the stage it often collapses into the fey. Cunningham just managed to hold the fort against Dadaism's incipient childishness, but he was sabotaged by Cage's score, a collage of telephone recordings informing listeners of rare-bird sightings, horse-race results, weather forecasts, etc. Whereas Events raise interesting questions about the nature of dance, giggles of this kind, once sprung from the washrooms of gas stations into a public forum, provoke dangerous questions about the Cunningham enterprise. Carolyn Brown, Cunningham's long-time dancing partner, once wrote about a conversation she had with a student. "Is he serious? I mean, isn't he just pulling our leg?" the student asked. After a long silence Brown replied, "Do you really believe that a man would spend his whole life working this hard, even going into debt, merely to pull *your* leg?" Cage's bright ideas and Cunningham's acceptance of them are no help to the cause. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Providence, Alain Resnais's first movie in English, strikes me as a work very much at the mercy of the viewer's mood of the moment. It takes place largely in the mind of Clive Langham (John Gielgud), a writer who presumes to feel himself cheated of the mantle of, say, Somerset Maugham, and who is panicked into a style of aphoristic savagery by this less than Olympian hubris. A septuagenarian steeped in expensive alcohol and mortally afflicted with rectal cancer (an affliction chosen, I'm afraid, for its shock value), he passes a pain-ridden, increasingly sodden night trying to compose in his mind yet another "social comedy"—this one to be peopled by the members of his family, as he sees them.

Not surprisingly, given the self-pity and rancor that possess this unseemly old man, he perceives them in the worst possible light, projecting their foibles, follies and deficiencies of personality to extremes that produce manikins of singular implausibility. And since Langham is in no shape to develop a coherent narrative, the small group controlled by his sovereign if mean-spirited mockery behaves at times with surreal inconsequence and is teleported hither and yon by his short-circuited recollections of places he has visited in a much-traveled life. (One of them, I believe, was Providence, R.I., but the title is intended to have more echoing overtones.)

All this, needless to say, can seem tediously self-indulgent, with its creators (David Mercer wrote the screenplay), able to duck the charge that second-rate, second-hand observations on the nature of man and destiny have been given a treatment far beyond their desserts by replying that their purpose was to expose the nature of a second-rate, second-hand man. But I went to the picture on an idle Sunday afternoon, of a mind to be entertained, and it entertained me.

That happened, I think, partly because of the behavior of the enthralled characters and partly because of the zany travelogue progress of the plot, which I took to be a sardonic comment on the deluxe tourism of the more cynical French films for export. Old father Gielgud's children include Dirk Bogarde as Claud, his lawyer son; Ellen Burstyn, Claud's wife; Elaine Stritch, Claud's mistress (also at times his mother—a not very interesting psychological stunner), and David Warner, as an enigmatic catalyst of personality clashes whose true relationship to the others is not revealed until the final episode, staged in the sunlight of "real" time. Once or twice, the voice of the wicked but enfeebled Clive escapes from the mouths of these people (it comes from Burstyn's with an effect sharply recalling *The Exorcist*), but even when they speak for themselves, or seem to, they employ a style that seems designed to prove them close students, but bad mimics, of Oscar Wilde. (It is unlikely that Clive at his best was much of a hand at dialogue.) The family utters these monstrosities of affectation in tones of earnest vehemence, but with a reserve

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of incredulity in their eyes that I found funny. Bogarde is particularly good at this and is given some of the most orotund examples to roll off his tongue.

Providence should really have been called *Persiflage*, in which case one's expectations would not have been abused. Nevertheless, it jabbed me under the ribs now and then. It's true enough that one may try to escape from a crisis of self-esteem by esteeming one's intimates at a very low value, and I can remember getting off brandied confections of the sort Clive Langham imposes on his loved ones. I can only hope that I also managed to look surprised by them.

A serious technical deficiency of the picture is its failure at the end to take the time necessary to show the characters in their own persons; as it is, one can't be sure how many fragments of shrewd observation the old man used to concoct his malicious farce. On the other hand, the film offers the pleasure of watching Gielgud in a solo performance (most of the time) of Gothic virtuosity. To say nothing of the vivid detail with which he evokes an old reprobate in a turmoil of fear, pain, bravado, hurt ego and shameful sentimentality, the man can belch on cue! □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

The press has been much more cordial to Peter Handke's *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams* (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St.) than it was to any of his plays previously offered in New York, the most recent of them being *Kaspar*. That is understandable because the earlier plays were more or less avant-garde and rather "difficult," while *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams* is simple, straightforward and "theatre" only by our latter-day extension of the word.

It is a "confessional" short story that lends itself to spoken monologue. In it a writer tries to set down his recollections of his mother, who had committed suicide some months earlier. He tells her life story: that of a simple woman born in a province of what used to be the Austro-Hungarian Empire among the humblest of uneducated folk. She, however, has a healthy appetite for life, learns to read good books, and gives promise of becoming a well-rounded human being. But an unfortunate affair, followed by marriage to a stupid man, the narrowness and hard domestic work of her environment, the advent of Hitler and all that bespeaks of constraint, lead to quiet despair, inanition and finally to suicide.

I am not telling this very well because, to be frank, at this writing ten days after the first night I have forgotten most of the details. The writing is truthful, sound, sympathetic (in an excellent translation from the German by Ralph Manheim) but I was not affected by it. Such histories are legion and always cause for a generalized regret, but that indicates the limitations of this sort of retelling. Perhaps Handke knew this; at the end of the piece he suggests that he may return to the subject when he feels he can do it greater justice. He may be reiterating one of the major themes of his work: the inadequacy of language to communicate reality of thought, feeling and behavior. But it is precisely the function of art to make the general particular, illuminating and moving. Handke's effect is only that of benevolent, rather than eloquent sentiment.

The most telling elements in the presentation are James Tilton's remarkably well-chosen photographic projections, which picture the mother at various stops of her life: the man she lived with, the townships, the Hitler period, the progressive decay of her features, etc. These give the story more body than the text. Its playing or, more exactly, its reading by Len Cariou, a well-equipped actor, is manly, intelligent, spoken in a good voice and entirely creditable; it has been hailed as a remarkable piece of acting—which it is not; it is hardly acting at all, but what I have called it: excellent reading.

What strikes me most is the enthusiasm with which the event has been received. Is our stage now so arid that any meritorious expression of thought or sentiment becomes worthy of special celebration? Has the drought in serious theatre become so extreme that a reminder of the ordinary facts of life, even in their most modest manifestations, has become *important*? Or are we only rejoicing that Handke, a presumably advanced and not easily accessible writer, here proves himself a regular fellow?

Hold Me! An Entertainment by Jules Feiffer is being given (until February 21) in the basement of the Sub-Plot Cabaret of the American Place Theatre. It is composed of short skits, most of them based on the author's well-known cartoons. They have the original Feiffer stamp: wry humor stemming from the moral discomfort of modern American civilization. Much of it is enough to make me wince even as I laugh out loud. Most of these pills of acrid jocularity work well and are in fact quite funny in their three-dimensional presentation: that is, with live actors. Some of them seem to require the dry thin line, the quick stab, of Feiffer's drawing.

The best way to convey the nature of the show's fun is to quote a few lines from among numerous examples. A self-confessed "rotten kid" has been so transformed by therapy that he becomes "nicer and nicer," so "hung up on nice" that he "gave [his] analyst guilt feelings." . . . A woman enters a department store to return a Christmas present. "My husband gave it to me," she says. "It's the wrong color. It's the wrong size. It's the wrong present. And he's the wrong husband. Every Christmas I realize that."

The incompatibility of the sexes receives the sharpest treatment. A bright woman who talks too much says men feel challenged by her and grow hostile. "So when I'm very attracted I make it a point to talk more slowly than I would to one of my woman friends. . . . [So] he tells me I'm the first woman he's met who's as interesting as one of his boy friends. That's love."

The briefest bits made me laugh the most. A boy speaks—in every possible rhythm and tone—"ME. ME. ME. ME. ME. ME. ME. ME. . . ." The Girl: "I." The boy yawns. . . . The overall mood is summed up by a man who reports, "I wake up singing. . . . I sing on the bus to work. . . . I sing on the street and a stranger puts a dime in my hand and

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asks how in a world full of misery are you the one man who's happy? 'Who's happy?' I reply to the stranger. I sing to drown out my screaming."

Five actors—Geraldine Brooks, Michael Tucci most notably—though not especially adept at this sort of comedy, are nevertheless thoroughly engaging.

Corinne Jacker's *My Life* (Circle Repertory Theatre) is a memory play in which a young man, confused as to "where he's going," recalls his boyhood, adolescence, his grandfather, his parents, a girl he once loved, his forays into radical activity. It ends in reconciliation with his family and acceptance of the girl with whom he and apparently his father have had an affair.

This is told in a convolution of flashbacks with two actors playing several of the parts at different ages. Nearly everyone in the cast plays well, especially Douglass Watson as the father (past 50), William Hurt as the pivotal young man after adolescence, Jo Henderson as his mother, very pretty Nancy Snyder as the young man's first love, and Claire Malis as the later one. All are well directed by Marshall Mason in David Potts's ingenious setting, which includes a "real" swimming pool in which almost every member of the company is obliged to immerse him or herself. There is good writing in the play on a level of respectable sophistication; there is very little that is unbelievable or false.

Why then was I left indifferent? And with a feeling that the piece might go on forever? In the manner of many plays of recent years, characters seem to indulge in a perpetual process of psychic nitpicking. But few interesting *events* result from it. What is crucial in the best novels and plays is not only the inner landscape depicted but the *action* which both embodies and follows from it. *My Life* is mostly rumination.

A good deal of the latest avant-garde drama is literary imitation or illustration of readings from the latter-day philosophic writings. The anguish and soul searching that are to be found in Strindberg's "experimental" plays, praised now as forerunners of the "absurdist" drama, were real; that is, experienced, *lived* by the author. This too—almost more historically or politically than personally—may be said of the dramatic writing of S.I. Witkiewicz, who was also a novelist, painter and philosopher. He was, says the critic Jan Kott in his *Theatre Notes*, "the most original man of letters in Poland between the two wars. The combination of cold blood and lunacy," Kott goes on to say, "had much greater density in Witkiewicz than in Artaud."

Witkiewicz, who was born in 1885, committed suicide in 1929, largely because of the double invasion of his country—first by the Germans and then by the Russians—but his despair at the state of the modern world and the catastrophe toward which it was leading had begun in him much earlier.

His *The Crazy Locomotive* (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St.) written in 1923, shows a corrupt civilization being conducted by criminals who are driving our "train" straight ahead at top speed to an inevitable smash. There is much surrealistic imagery, characterization and incident in the presentation of this parable, but the intent is clear.

A very promising 24-year-old director from Canada, Des McAnuff, has staged the play as a sort of 1920s film thriller, which makes it less hallucinatory than it must have been in the author's imagination. The American style used at Theatre Four demystifies the play and makes it humorous; however, it is probably the style most suitable to present-day presentation here. Within the chosen mode, everything is skillfully done in Douglas Schmidt's admirably designed set—it is in itself an "actor"—and there is excellence, too, in Carol Oditz's costumes, in Pril Smiley's electronic music and orchestration, and in the devoted, hard-working, able group of actors. □

GHAZAL
(Translated from the Persian by W.S. Merwin with Talat Sait Halman)

That moon which the sky never saw
even in dreams
has risen again

bringing a fire
that no water can drown

See here where the body
has its house
and see here my soul

the cup of love has made the one
drunk
and the other a ruin

When the tavern-keeper
became my heart's companion

love turned my blood
to wine
and my heart burned on a spit

When the eye is full of him
a voice resounds

Oh cup
be praised
oh wine be proud

Suddenly when my heart saw
the ocean of love

it leapt away from me calling
Look for me

The face of Shams-ud Din
the glory of Tabriz

is the sun that hearts follow
like clouds

Rumi (1207-1273)

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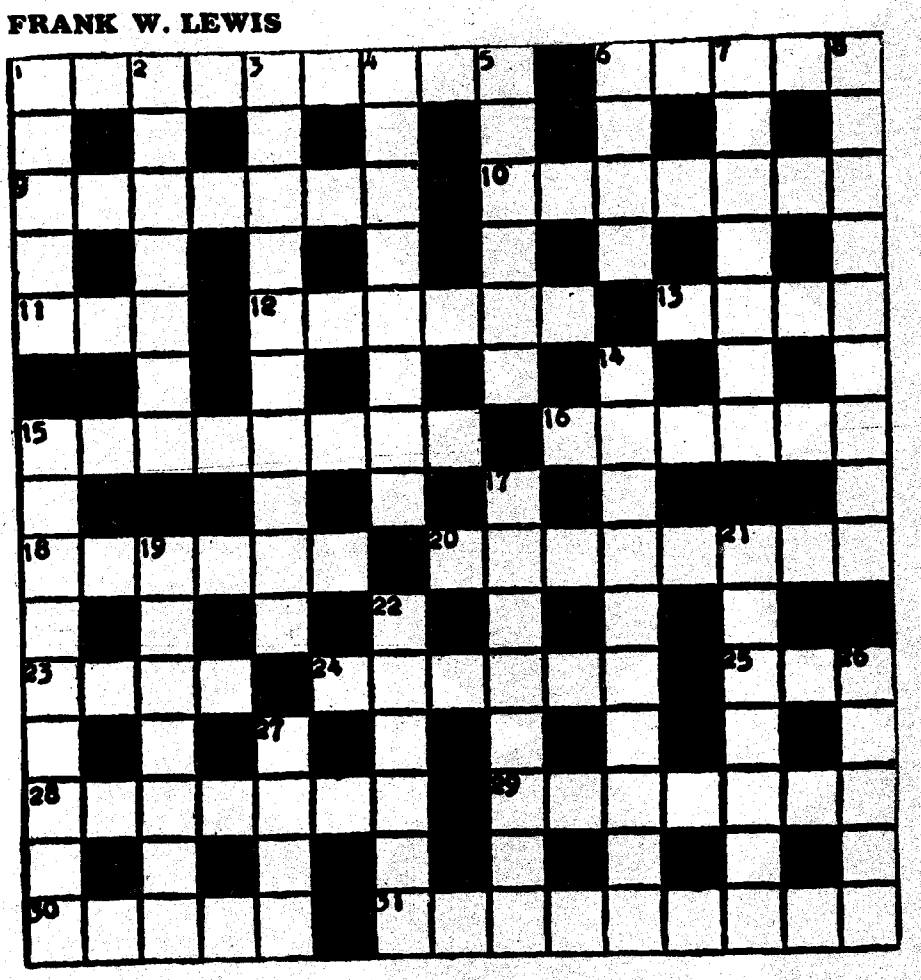
Puzzle Definitions

ACROSS

1 Where they direct space for lumber?
6 Broken plate, possibly of rose pattern. (5)
9 Ism seen possible as one that might eventually get to you. (7)

Crossword Puzzle No. 1666

FRANK W. LEWIS



10 and 11 He made a 29 of the 15-across type famous. (Could it be my clean shirts not back?) (10)
12 Half the clued number can be sufficiently developed. (6)
13 Suitable for a sporting event. (4)
15 Food with something associated with oil or water suggests a good buy. (8)
16 Where one might expect a model poker game at ten, perhaps. (6)
18 Giving a handle, as they say. (6)
20 See 27 down.
23 Possibly a relative of the tuna. (4)
24 One who versified could make a silly person sort of hop to it. (6)
25 How 21 starts to come back, or perhaps finishes. (3)
28 If a person is, he's probably in a class by himself. (7)
29 Speaking of where you live— (7)
30 Inexpensive number to pile up. (5)
31 Possibly produces a green set. (9)

DOWN

1 It takes an American poet to be something catchy. (5)
2 He used to give out with parts of the realm scattered around on the inside. (5)
3 Said, perhaps, to have a number due, denying any responsibility for the outcome. (10)
4 You might have to get over it, if you want to win. (8)
5 I'm coming up with the sort of internal glow that Kipling called character. (6)
6 March product of 10 and 11 with this assignment. (4)
7 What might get docked suggests the conclusion of the story. (4-3)
8 Taps might be associated with such and makes a quick run-off. (6,3)
14 A hard thing to satisfy when you have nothing but 6-foot monks. (1,4,5)
15 See 27 down
17 Alpha, Inc. (The order is bad for the father of the army.) (8)
19 A person has a place to drive from. being a mammal, naturally. (7)
21 Part of the bleeding arm entails dressing with it. (7)
22 An angry boxer, for instance, could be dangerous. (3,3)
26 What is possibly well-produced has a few extra lines and catches the breath. (5)
27, 20 and 15 down How to switch on at a psychedelic display or dance, as they say. (4,3,5,9)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1665

ACROSS: 1 and 5 Stormy weather; 10 Scripture; 11 Shrug; 12 Avowing; 13 Prevail; 14 Mowed; 16 Air letter; 18 Annulment; 20 Straw; 22 Tabards; 24 Equable; 26 Abele; 27 Set adrift; 28 and 29 Take the day off. DOWN: 2 Torso; 3 Replied; 4 Your Grace; 5 Whelp; 6 Austere; 7 Hereafter; 8 Regular; 9 and 18 down As warm as toast; 15 Windbreak; 17 Retreated; 19 Largest; 20 Soundly; 21 Wrests; 23 Susie; 25 Brief.

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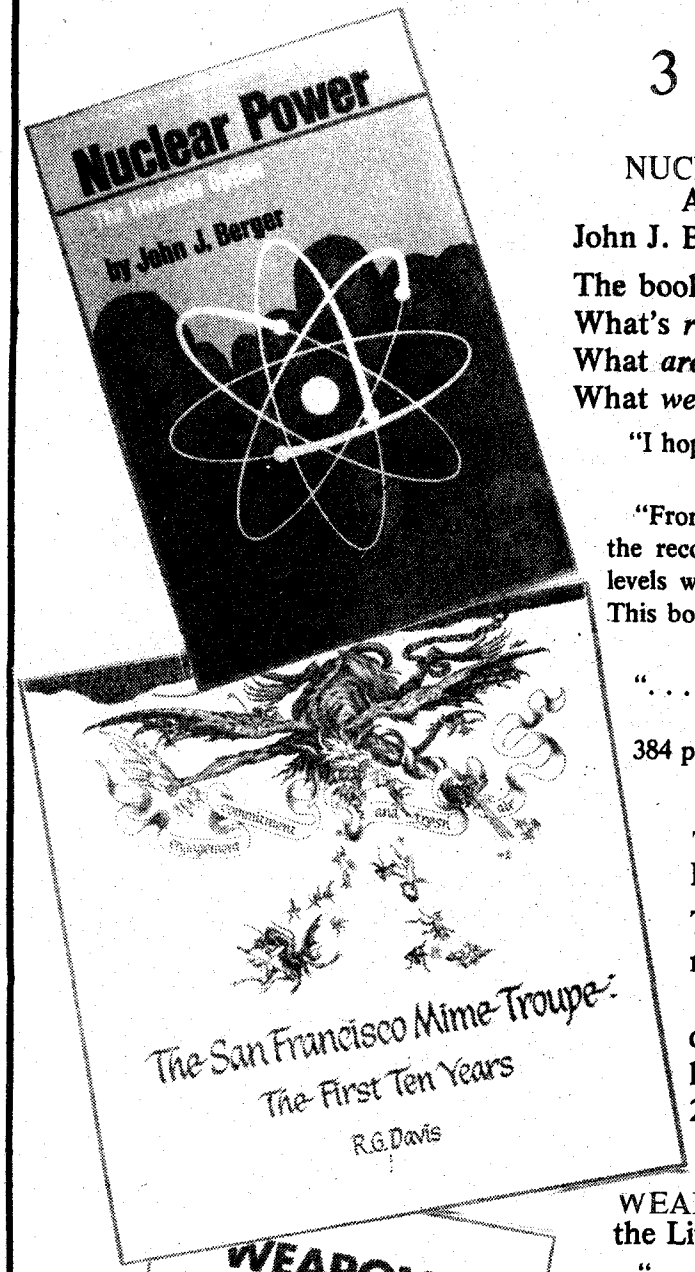

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